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ABSTRACT

This "Special Focus" issue of "America's Family Support Magazine," focuses on parent leadership and family involvement. Articles pertaining to this focus include: (1) "Forging Equal Partnerships" (Ahsan); (2) "Who Best Represents the Voice of Parents?" (Foster); (3) "Parent Leadership Training Programs" (Baum); (4) "Parents as Family Support Staff" (Williams); (5) "How To Maintain Family Involvement" (Spriggs); and (6) "A Statewide Network for Parent Voices in Illinois" (Cramer). Other feature articles included in the issue are: (1) "Changing Our Community" (Cosby); (2) "Ten Years of HIPPY" (Westheimer); (3) "Libraries for Families" (Feinberg and Koser); and (4) "The Soul of the Movement" (Kinch). Regular sections of the magazine include book reviews, editorials, and descriptions of program practices. (KB)

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America's

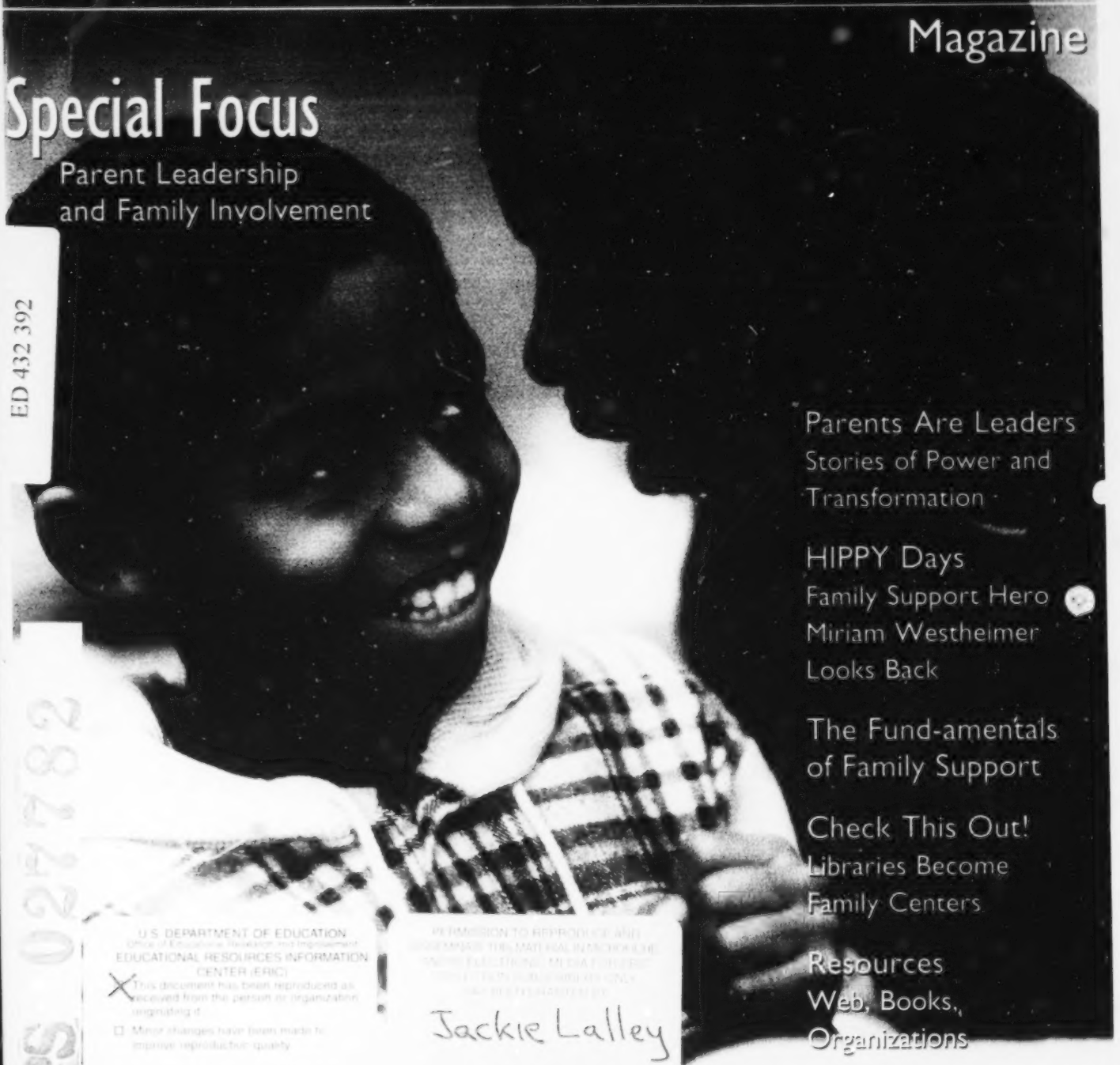
Spring 1999 ■ Volume 18 · Number 1

FAMILY SUPPORT

Magazine

Special Focus

Parent Leadership
and Family Involvement



Parents Are Leaders
Stories of Power and Transformation

HIPPY Days
Family Support Hero Miriam Westheimer Looks Back

The Fund-amentals of Family Support

Check This Out!
Libraries Become Family Centers

Resources
Web, Books, Organizations

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Jackie Lalley

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Principles of FAMILY SUPPORT PRACTICE

1. *Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.*
2. *Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members—adults, youth, and children.*
3. *Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.*
4. *Programs affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.*
5. *Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.*
6. *Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.*
7. *Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.*
8. *Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.*
9. *Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.*

In This Issue

America's Family Support Magazine ■ Spring 1999 ■ Volume 18 Number 1

Features

Changing Our Community 9
by Michael Cosby

A father tells how he and his neighbors moved out drug dealers and are working to bring back "mom and pop" businesses to their St. Louis neighborhood.

Ten Years of HIPPY 15
by Miriam Westheimer

The founder of America's ground-breaking parent education program tells how she made it happen, and shares four principles for keeping the family support faith.

Libraries for Families 43
by Sandra Feinberg and Gail Koser

Libraries and family support programs are partnering across America with great results for families and communities. Family Place libraries give you a model and training for your own partnerships.

The Soul of the Movement 51
by Richard Kinch

A family support veteran and former funder shares his arsenal of strategies to convince others—and yourself—of the value of your work.

On the Cover

"Love facilitates growth," says Mike Forzley, Director of Friends of the Children, in Portland, Oregon. Friends of the Children pairs troubled children with "Friends"—committed, full-time mentors from their own communities. "We have a philosophy that says that the parents, no matter where they are in their lives, are doing the best job they can under the circumstances. . . . They see how the Friend is acting with their kid. Suddenly the parent has a person who is treating them with dignity and kindness, and pretty soon the parent starts to feel a little different about themselves."

Photo © 1996 Stephen Shames / Matrix. This photograph is part of a nationwide exhibit tour and public education campaign, Pursuing the Dream: What Helps Children and Their Families Succeed. To get involved or to bring the exhibit to your community, contact Shamara Riley at FRCA, 312/338-0900, shamara.riley@frca.org.

Special Focus

Parents Are Leaders

Forging Equal Partnerships 19
Overview by Nilofer Ahsan

The national landscape of efforts to promote parents' roles in shaping the services, programs, and systems that affect families.

Roles for Families as Leaders 20

A getting-started list of ways parents can have a say in designing the programs and systems that affect their families.

Who Best Represents the Voice of Parents? 21
by Roxy Foster

Parent involvement is required in many planning efforts. Who are "the right parents," and how are they to be involved? The director of the Minnesota Parenting Association addresses "professional parents" and other issues.

Parent Leadership Training Programs 24
by Susan Baum

How can training help parents grow as leaders? Five training programs across the nation offer diverse training models and show how training helps parents grow as leaders in their communities and as a force in policy making.

How We Grew Through Parent Training 25–29

Five parents speak out on their personal and family journeys. Interviews with Migdalia Castro, Anna Green, Tom and Lisa Reynolds, and Nancy Santiago.

Short Guide to Programs Nationwide 30

Special Focus, continued

Parents as Family Support Staff 31
by Jeanne Williams
How family resource centers in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, are successfully hiring former participants as program staff.

How to Maintain Family Involvement 34
by Aubrey Spriggs
What supports do families need in order to be satisfied, stay motivated, and grow in their roles as leaders?

A Statewide Network for Parent Voices in Illinois 36
by Lina Cramer
Through the Illinois Family Partnership Network, parents are making their voices heard in policy decisions that affect them and their children.

Resource File 37

Departments

Quick Takes 5
Family Success: It's Not Just a Job ... P-dres Power! Institute for Latino Dads ... Family: States Make A Day of It ... Good Parenting Crosses Income Lines ... and more!

Letters to FRCA 7

Looking Ahead 8
by Virginia L. Mason, Executive Director
Welcome to *America's Family Support Magazine* — a new way to make family support a household word.

On the Other Hand 11
by Betsy Crane and Charles Bruner
Should family support staff be credentialed? The founder of New York's Family Development Credential and the Director of the Child and Family Policy Center offer two sides to the issue.

Books 47
reviewed by Joanne Kelly
Strengthening the Family-Professional Partnership in Services for Young Children by Richard N. Roberts, Ph.D., Sarah Rule, Ph.D., and Mark S. Innocenti, Ph.D.

Also... *International Perspectives On Family Support*

Spreading the Word 49
by Shamara Riley
How to tap families' potential as the best advocates for family support programs.

Ask Sharon 56
by Sharon Sneed
Collaboration—Are you practicing it? And if you were, would you know it?

Surf's Up! 57
Want help adopting a child and/or supporting adoptive families? Visit www.adopting.com, and read how one mom pulls together a universe of adoption resources on the world wide web.

Crossword Puzzle 54

Family Portrait 59

I Told You So

Assumption: Poor families have "risks" and rich families have "resources." Reality: No way, says a survey of over 44,000 diverse families. All families have resources, even those that struggle.

"Fortunately, regardless of income, most parents read to their young children and participate in their communities," says Alan Weil, Director of the Urban Institute's Assessing the New Federalism project, which conducted interviews with individuals in 44,461 randomly selected households nationwide over 10 months. "Children take part in extracurricular activities, are generally involved in school, and relatively few have significant behavioral problems."

Get more detailed information on a broad range of issues affecting children and families by downloading the Institute's report, Snapshots of America's Families, at www.urban.org, or call the Urban Institute at 202/261-5709.

Community-Based Is Best

Families get the best job training and job services from community-based organizations—better than those provided by city and state agencies, says Bennett Harrison, professor of urban political economy at the Milano Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy at the New School for Social Research.

Community-based programs care about one thing above all else: the overall health of the community. They see living-wage jobs as one piece of that goal, so they're good at spotting the problems that can prevent families from getting and keeping jobs—like lack of transportation, lack of affordable quality childcare, and domestic violence—and addressing them using the community's hidden assets.

(Reported in *Shelterforce Magazine*.)

For the Record

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection."

Article 25, UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. Drafted by the UN Human Rights Commission, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, the Declaration was the first set of human rights standards accepted by governments worldwide.

Padres Power!

Latino families are the fastest growing population in the U.S. Now, there's a new institute to support Latino fathers and families, and those who serve them—the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute. The focus is to "promote positive involvement of Latino males in their families and community." That means helping fathers to be active and positive partners in nurturing, guiding, and educating their children. The institute can help with substance abuse, domestic violence, gang violence, literacy, teen pregnancy, and child abuse. To learn more about training, direct service, and research provided by the institute—which is a collaboration among Bienvenidos Family Services, The National Compadres Network, and Behavioral Assessment, Inc.—contact: National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, 5252 East Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90022, 323/728-7770.

Quick Takes

Family Day Quiz

My family got the most attention:

- **A.** When we flew coast-to-coast with a teething baby on a crowded jet
- **B.** When the toddler threw a temper tantrum in the mall
- **C.** When our teenager had his lip pierced
- **D.** During our state's Family Day

While little can be done about A, B, and C, there are plenty of states that are making D a more common answer. All the way from Connecticut to Alaska, states are opting to dedicate a whole day to activities, ceremonies, and official declarations focused on the importance of families.

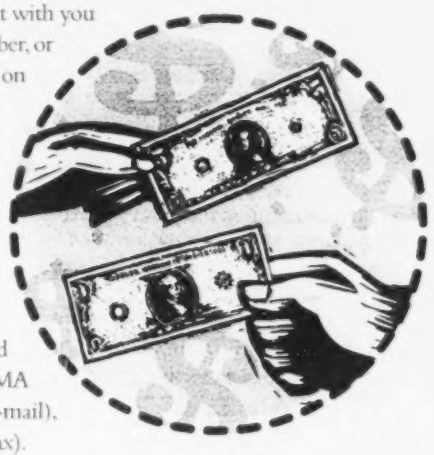
When ninth-grader Courtney Southard of Ansonia, Conn., said in a prize-winning essay that Connecticut should honor families with a holiday, Governor John Rowland listened—and sponsored a Family Day that will be celebrated each year. Other states that have or are starting Family Days include Arizona, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, Nevada, North Carolina, New Mexico, and Tennessee. Want to start a Family Day? Shoot for the first Sunday of August, and you'll be in good company. That's when four states celebrate—the others chose different dates.

For help planning your Family Day, call Shamara Riley at FRCA, 312/338-0900.

Send your Quick Takes to: FRCA, Attn: AFSM Quick Takes, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60606, 312/338-1522 (fax), afsm@frca.org.

It's Not Just a Job ...

If you can't say something nice about your state's welfare reform program ... read this report and learn how to improve it! *State Investment in Income and Asset Development for Poor Families* gives you a constructive way to talk to your congress members about advocating for poor families. It covers the ins and outs of "asset development"—ways that laws can help poor families build a solid financial future, including IDAs (Individual Development Accounts) and other strategies that your state can use. Take it with you on your next visit to your congress member, or send it along with letters from families on how welfare reform has affected them.



Future reports will focus on what else families need to be economically secure—such as above-poverty wages, training, transportation, and quality childcare—and how state policies can help.

Contact: The Center on Hunger and Poverty, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155, HN1655@handsnet.org (e-mail), 617/627-9356 (phone), 617/627-3020 (fax).

Draining the Fuel from Teen and Binge Drinking

How do you combat teen drinking and binge drinking? In the past, most programs have tried to change individuals' behavior so that they resist peer pressure and "just say no." Now, some programs are getting to the root of the problem by finding out why and how underage drinkers develop these harmful habits—and changing those factors.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is funding two national programs that work to change or counter the effects of social and cultural beliefs that encourage underage drinking; lack of enforcement of underage drinking laws; and advertising and marketing that attracts young consumers. For a copy of the Foundation's newsletter focusing on these programs, e-mail advances@rwjf.org, or write: Communications Office, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, College Rd. East, P.O. Box 2316, Princeton, NJ 08543-2316.

Letters

America's Family Support Magazine

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Family Resource Coalition of America is an alliance of people and organizations convinced that in order to do the best we can by our children, we need to support and strengthen families and communities. Since 1981, FRCA has been helping the family movement grow by gathering knowledge, providing consulting services, advocating for public policy, building constituency and networks, and producing publications and materials.

America's Family Support Magazine is published quarterly in the public interest by the Family Resource Coalition of America, a tax-exempt, non-profit organization, and is a benefit of membership in FRCA. Subscriptions are available. Readers are encouraged to copy and share its content, provided they cite FRCA as the source.

This publication was produced with the generous support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Princeton, N.J.)

Unsolicited submissions and story ideas are encouraged. Guidelines for writers are at www.frca.org, or contact FRCA, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60606, 312/338-0900, 312/338-1522 (fax), afsm@frca.org.

What Do Parents Want?

I was recently appointed by Senate Minority Leader Daschle to the first Parent Advisory Council in U.S. history, which is responsible for making voices of parents heard in federal policies that affect children and families.

For 11 years I worked only part-time so I could be with my two children, and then, in 1988, I applied my life experience in developing a parent-professional partnership approach to prevent bad outcomes for kids, called FAST (Families and Schools Together). FAST became a Wisconsin statewide anti-drug initiative in 1989. It is now being widely replicated and implemented in 34 states, three Indian nations, and five countries. FAST works to prevent substance abuse through a multi-family group approach that offers structured interactive opportunities for building strong relationships.

So I can better serve parents in my role in the council, I would like to hear from programs that work with families across the nation. I would appreciate if your readers could answer the following questions and send their answers to me at the address below:

1. What are our biggest concerns as parents about our youth in respect to substance abuse?
2. What do we believe as parents can most benefit our youth in preventing them from becoming addicted to substances?
3. Are there psycho-social-economic-political-contextual issues to consider for change other than access to drugs and alcohol? Be specific.
4. What do we as parents think about the current laws and formal consequences related to drug use for our youth?
5. What do we as parents want the White House and Congress to do to improve the world for our youth as they face the world today?

Lynn McDonald
The FAST Project
Wisconsin Center for
Education Research
Univ. of Wis.-Madison
1025 W. Johnson St.
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608/263-9476
Fax: 608/263-6448

Congratulations on your appointment! We are happy to play a role in facilitating input for the council. We encourage families and those who work with families to send responses directly to you.

Addressing Domestic Violence

I have just received the latest issue of your magazine [*Strengthening Families in the Welfare Reform Era, Vol. 17, No. 4*]. Excellent publication. We have one of the highest domestic violence rates in the state of New Jersey in our county, and the article on welfare to work and domestic violence is very useful to our local agency, which assists victims of abuse and domestic violence. How can we subscribe so that we receive the magazine on a regular basis?

Thanks very much.

Cynthia B. Sosnowski, Director
Cape May County, New Jersey
Healthy Community Coalition

It is our goal to provide you with a publication that you can use in your day-to-day work. America's Family Support Magazine *is mailed to members of FRCA every quarter, year-round. To receive this and other membership benefits (including discounts on our conferences and publications) or to purchase a subscription, call 312/338-0900.*

Linda Turner
Constituency Services Coordinator

Send your letters to: FRCA, Attn: AFSM Letters, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60606, 312/338-1522 (fax), afsm@frca.org. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Looking Ahead

by Virginia L. Mason, Executive Director

The launch of *America's Family Support Magazine* heralds an exciting time for FRCA and for the expanding field of family support. FRCA introduces this magazine against a backdrop of serious commitments to the future, one of which is to make family support a household word and something that we will not be without in this affluent nation.

Due to what Sharon Lynn Kagan of the Yale Bush Center has called "definitional ambiguity," family support has become part of a confusing list of terms: family-centered practice, family based services, family resource works, family support and parent education programs—all of which seem to mean the same or almost the same thing or represent the same practice.

The founders of the family support movement in the 1970s believed that parents are the essential guardians of the future. To them and to the present-day constituency of FRCA, family support comes from basic principles of equality and justice, and represents a shift from specialized, categorized programs to a holistic awareness of the whole environment surrounding a child, family, and community. Family support is born out of a long American history of grassroots mutual support: settlement houses, community organizing, civil rights, health and medical advocacy, self-help, parents organizing to help themselves and their children. It emerged from strands which were multi-cultural, practical, and based on the real lives of real people and the interlocking nature of their needs and desires and the strength of their talents and leadership.

Since those early days, not so long ago, family resource and support programs have appeared across the country—an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 of them. Some coexist with other programs and some stand alone. There has been rapid growth of family resource centers in schools. Non-traditional organizations have also taken on the work—Boys and Girls Clubs, libraries, hospitals, YMCAs, community colleges, and extensions services. These programs are funded through voluntarism; state, county, and city departments of health and human services; United Ways; churches; departments of education and of public health; and foundations. The family support field has diversified tremendously over the last 25 years, including a range of professions, service categories of state government, families themselves, and others active in our neighborhoods and communities.

But in general, the public is not yet aware of family resource and support programs and is not demanding or even advocating for them—because they don't know about them, understand their terminology, or relate to them as a mainstream necessity. Federal legislation since the 1980s has provided funding for family support, making the term somewhat better known in federal government and in state child welfare and family preservation systems.

FRCA is now strongly recommending that family support as a term be used and embraced by the field as a "practice chip": the set of principles and behavioral imperatives which can be used by institutions and programs and eventually by all. FRCA is making every effort to embed family support principles in every context and in every community—flying banners, signs, and flags so that the public knows that wherever they see the words "family support," they will find support and respect for their families. Family support tells us how we will be treated and served, and demands from us how we will treat, serve, and value each other.

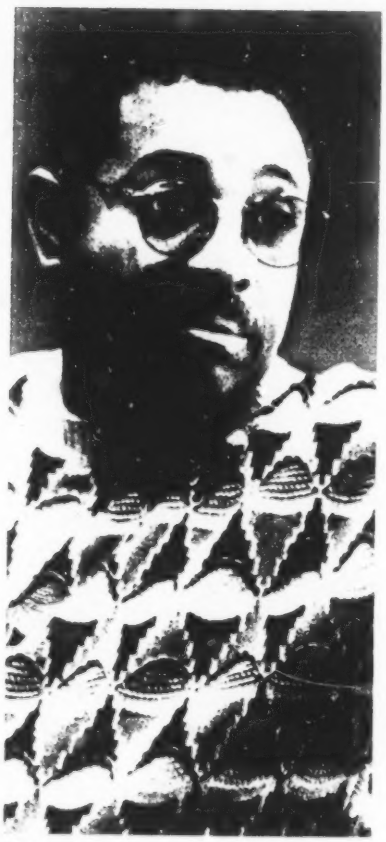
Family support requires that we be change makers and expand this nation's perspective on essential qualities of citizenship, respect for one another, and support of all generations. We cannot neglect any family without neglecting ourselves. We must insist that government belong to us and be responsive to a humane and giving population.

As we near the year 2000 and the millennium conference in April, we have work to do—all of us—to make family support work. We combine knowledge, information, and service in an intricate pattern to match the uniqueness of each single family. We look through the filters of respect, equality, and justice. Family support is about life-long human learning together: building and renewing community, family, and children, and individually creating the future.

America's Family Support Magazine is one of the ways we can all come together to build a strong national identity for family support. We hope it helps you in your work—which is our work—and in what we must do to change the way America works for families and families work for America.

Changing Our Community

Here in St. Louis, there has been a shift in the way we view our community problems. Instead of just talking about them in one forum after another, we are taking concrete steps to do something together.



I got involved in neighborhood improvement projects to make the future better for my 15-year-old daughter and my five-year-old son. I am a homeowner in Gravios Park, one of the target areas for two projects focused on building new homes, making home improvements, destroying vacant buildings, improving education, creating jobs, and building playgrounds. Banks and cooperatives have committed $750 million through small interest loans and neighborhood grants.

My involvement started when my son was three-and-a-half years old and I went to a "children's day" at Head Start, where I participated in class work with him. His teacher told me about the monthly parent meetings, which ultimately led me to the neighborhood improvement projects.

Weeding Out Drug Dealers and Planting Hope

I am also involved in the Chippewa Neighborhood Association. We're working to get drugs dealers out of the neighborhood and get landlords to keep the property up. The landlords have blamed neighbors for running down the property. To determine who was responsible, we started going to each apartment to document its condition and to ask the tenants if we could verify their complaints. We also work with the neighborhood stabilization officer to ultimately tear down buildings that are in bad shape, and we have added neighborhood police.

As we target drug houses and try to get them out of the neighborhood, we've seen them move from one block to the next, further and further away.

In our "Weed and Seed" project, we're working to weed out the drug dealers and plant the seeds for a healthy environment for our children. As we target drug houses and try to get them out of the neighborhood, we've seen them move from one block to the next, further and further away. We lend camcorders to people in the neighborhood to catch drug dealers in the act, and we encourage neighbors to take down license plate numbers of suspicious cars.

What's Ahead?

We want to bring the "mom and pop" businesses back to the neighborhood. We want places where you can feel comfortable, and we are drafting a plan of what we want our communities to look like in five and 10 years.

We've raised money to hire two facilitators, who will work out of the Taproots School of Arts in our neighborhood. The Executive Director, Melanie Daniels, has donated space for a "wel-

come center," a large living room with comfortable furniture that serves as a meeting place for families. There we can access computers and office supplies, obtained through a grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. There is another neighborhood group hoping to partner with us, which is made up of parents and professionals, and we look forward to starting a Parents Anonymous support group in the near future.

There's a new sense of hope in our community. I firmly believe we will be the ones to make the decisions about our neighborhoods for a change.

To get involved or to get more information, contact the Taproots School of Arts at 314/752-9752, or Michael Cosby at 314/771-4821.

Michael Cosby is a community leader in St. Louis, Missouri.

Goals of the Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative

- Parents are working.
- Young children are ready to enter school.
- Children and youth are succeeding in school.
- Children and families are healthy.
- Youth are ready to enter the work force and become productive citizens.
- Children are safe in their families and families are safe in their communities.
- Residents are organized to pursue the best interests of the neighborhood.
- Residents have access to safe, effective transportation systems.
- Residents have access to decent and affordable housing.
- Residents live in neighborhoods with quality parks, open space, recreational institutions, and community centers.
- Neighborhood residents have access to financial capital for homes, businesses, and personal needs.
- A public information system links residents to resources and opportunities throughout the region.

The first six of these bullet points are Missouri's statewide Core Results for Children and Families.

CARE ABOUT FAMILIES? PUT IT IN

WRITING

FRCA wants to share your ideas with the rest of the family support field. Send us your:

- *Top ten ways to help strengthen families*
- *Inspiring tales of family and community*
- *Fundraising success stories*
- *Strategies for organizing your paper load*
- *Fresh ideas for involving fathers in family support*
- *Practices that strengthen families' culture*
- *Research news and case studies*
- *Questions for our advice columnist*
- *Open letters to the field*

Or any other lessons you've learned, questions you ponder, or brainstorms you've had as you work to support and strengthen families.

TO GET GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING, VISIT THE FRCA WEB SITE AT WWW.FRCA.ORG, OR CALL OUR PUBLICATIONS STAFF AT 312.338.0900 X122

Should Family Support Staff Be Credentialed?

Credentialing Is the Next Step for Family Support

by Betsy Crane

As evidenced by the Family Development Credential (FDC) program in New York state, credentialing offers tremendous advantages to families, staff, and the entire family support field. It validates the skills and knowledge of the workers, and can be a step for them toward college education. A family support training program also leads to a credentialing program with a clear set of principles and a standardized curriculum that can help create a large cohort of people working to change systems and institutionalize family support practices. In New York state, people who participate in interagency community based classes and receive the credential have widely varying educational backgrounds. They include front-line workers, parent advocates, and volunteers, as well as supervisors and people in administrative roles.

Validation of Workers' Skills and Knowledge

Most adults do not learn new skills and ideas until they have used them. Action is a crucial part of the credentialing program. When workers make choices about the skills they would like to practice, they are learning how to develop

continued on page 12

Commitment, Not Credentialing, Is Key To Community Staffing

by Charles Bruner

Three family centers in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania—in Homewood, Duquesne, and Wilkinsburg—made an explicit effort to recruit and hire community workers. After three years, they are staffed nearly entirely from within their own communities, from the director to the front-line staff and van drivers.

The directors at each of the three family centers believe the emphasis upon hiring from within the community has been an important one, although one that has required adjustments to traditional hiring and staff development practices.

All three directors cited common themes in constructing an effective community hiring process. First, schooling and credentialing did not serve as a good screen for community hiring, both because it narrowed the

continued on page 12

Crane, continued

and implement action plans. When they are required to reflect on what they did well and what they might do differently another time, they revise their perceptions, and act on the revised thinking. Field advisors are key to facilitating and modeling this process of choosing, acting, and reflecting. One worker remarked that through the New York credentialing program, she had "changed her perspective" on working with families.

Enhanced Learning

For workers themselves, having a credential granted through a respected institution validates their skills and abilities, and is a representation of their commitment to strengths-based, family-centered practice. This has personal implications and can lead workers to seek constantly to improve their skills and progress in the field.

Career Ladder

As the knowledge and reputation of the program has grown, there is a "value-added" allure for workers. Staff have received promotions on the basis of their obtaining credentials. Agencies have begun to include family support credentials when stating their preferences for filling job openings, along with other credentials such as the Child Development Associate (CDA) and Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC).

College Credit

Because credentials indicate that the worker has participated in a standardized curriculum and assessment process, colleges are granting credentialed workers credit toward other certificates and degrees. Colleges can review the curriculum and be confident that learning has occurred, no matter where or by whom it is taught. Examples of credits in New York state include:

Transfer credit: The National Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction reviewed the FDC program and recommended that institutions grant three credits for those who have taken just the FDC training and seven for those who have earned the FDC credential. A university transcript service sponsored by Regents College will list FDC training as college credit on an official transcript.

External degree program: At New York's Empire State College, students who have completed FDC training and earned the credential are eligible to receive up to 14 college credits.

Taking FDC as a college class: The Human Services Program at a community college in Corning, New York, offers FDC as credit-bearing classes. Students earn 12 credits for the classes and two semesters of practicum at a job site or internship.

continued on page 13

Bruner, continued

pool of candidates from within the neighborhoods and because it did not help distinguish among people with the skills and orientations to do the work. In fact, two directors indicated that college degrees and book knowledge ran counter to developing relationships with the families who came to the center. The Homewood experience was that, while sufficient MSWs could be (and were) recruited who lived in Homewood, many had training backgrounds that placed them at odds with the work expected of them. Homewoods's initially high turnover largely was a result of hiring by credential rather than by experience. Skills and work orientations directors felt important for this work were flexibility in assuming different roles, commitment to the community, and belief and interest in working with families.

Second, directors found that hiring from within the community required new safeguards against political favoritism, particularly since credentialing was not used to screen out potential candidates. In each center, community councils and families who participated in the screening and hiring process themselves, with the help of the director, established structures to guard against favoritism and cronyism. In fact, residents took this responsibility very seriously. In the end, directors greatly valued resident perspectives, and were able to use the knowledge the community had of itself to their advantage in the hiring process.

Third, directors and the centers had to focus more attention on addressing issues of confidentiality than they had encountered in previous work. Each center not only provides training in maintaining confidentially, but also has policies for resolving instances where families feel their confidentiality has been breached. In addition, directors also had to prepare workers for the fact that, living in the community, they would see families they serve in grocery stores and in churchs, and their own personal space would be interrupted. "Duquesne had a very small, close knit community," director Faith Brown indicated. "That means you're never off from work. If you go to the Giant Eagle, you may run into someone and we have to have staff who are prepared to make that a positive."

Still, directors felt they were able to resolve this concern because they could

continued on page 13

Crane, continued

Continuing education: Several colleges have awarded continuing education hours for FDC, which can be transformed into college credit if a worker enrolls in a degree program.

Increased Program Quality

A credentialing component in a training program allows for monitoring of quality and maintenance of consistency throughout the system. FDC trainers send participant feedback forms to Cornell, and attend Trainers Update meetings. All students' portfolios are reviewed by Cornell, providing a feedback mechanism to monitor where support or technical assistance may be needed.

Evidence of Competency

Credentialing assures agencies and funders that providers of services are qualified and are competent in using effective helping strategies. In the era of managed care, such assurances can be valuable in negotiating funding agreements.

Recognition for the Family Support Approach

In February, 700 people gathered at a celebration in the New York state capitol to recognize the first 350 workers who have earned a Family Development Credential—evidence that credentialing can create attention and recognition for family support. As increasing numbers of workers obtain training together in their local communities and earn their credential, a growing corps of people advocate with and on behalf of families based on a shared set of principles.

Betsy Crane is Senior Trainer and Collaboration Manager for the Cornell Empowering Families Program, which administers the FDC and is conducting research on program outcomes. She is a member of FRCA.

Bruner, continued

attract workers who looked at their work as more than an eight-to-five job. The biggest pluses directors cited regarding hiring from within the community were that workers knew the people and resources in the community and were dedicated to making a difference. The rapport they felt workers were able to establish with families was in large part reflective of the fact that they were part of the same community.

This article is excerpted from From Community-Based to Community Staffed: The Experience of Three Allegheny County Family Centers in Community Hiring, Starting Points/Office of Child Development University of Pittsburgh, *available on-line at www.pitt.edu/~ocdweb/, or by calling 412/624-7986.*

A shorter version is found as one of seven articles in Wise Counsel: Redefining the Role of Professionals and Community Workers in the Helping Process, *available through the National Center for Service Integration (NCSI) Clearinghouse, c/o Child and Family Policy Center, 1021 Fleming Building, 218 6th Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50309.*

Charles Bruner is Director of the Child and Family Policy Center in Iowa, which manages the NCSI Clearinghouse. He is a member of FRCA.

Parent Participant Survey*

What do you think is good about hiring center staff from the community?

A total of 59 parents participating in family support centers in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, answered as follows:

- Knowledge of community, its needs and resources (14)
- Staff approachability, familiarity, and trust (10)
- Understanding of residents and their needs (7)
- Jobs, economic benefit to community (7)
- Ability to relate and empathize (5)
- Staff having stake, investment in community (5)
- General benefit to community ownership and pride (4)
- Other (7)

Do you think there are any problems with this way of providing services?

Only 4 of the respondents cited problems:

- Confidentiality (2)
- Professionalism of response (2)

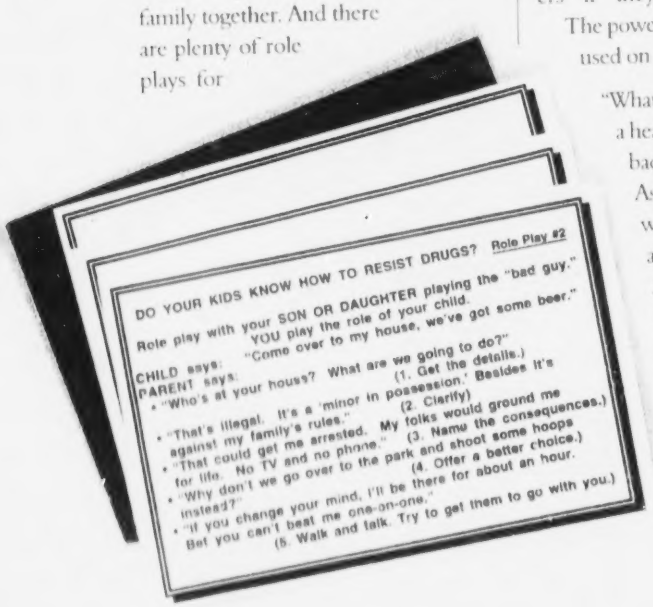
*Excerpted from *From Community-Based to Community Staffed*.

Preventing Drug Abuse is in the Cards

By Sonya Young

How can families turn the most popular place in the house into the central place to discuss an important health issue? They can put colorful flashcards on the refrigerator, prop them on the kitchen table, or tape them to the television to get the family involved. With a few easy-to-find items, families can make these flashcards, modeled after *Cool Parenting Rules and Tools for the Prevention of Substance Abuse.*

The cards run the gamut of creative strategies for preventing drug abuse and promoting health as a family. Some give parents straightforward tips for dealing with discipline. Others offer creative ideas for spending more time as a family together. And there are plenty of role plays for children to help them resist drugs as well as family resources such as hotlines for getting help.


DO YOUR KIDS KNOW HOW TO RESIST DRUGS? Role Play #2
Role play with your SON OR DAUGHTER playing the "bad guy."
YOU play the role of your child.
CHILD says: "Come over to my house, we've got some beer."
PARENT says:
• "Who's at your house? What are we going to do?" (1. Get the details.)
• "That's illegal. It's a 'minor in possession.' Besides it's against my family's rules." (2. Clarify)
• "That could get me arrested. My folks would ground me for life. No TV and no phone." (3. Name the consequences.)
• "Why don't we go over to the park and shoot some hoops instead?" (4. Offer a better choice.)
• "If you change your mind, I'll be there for about an hour. Bet you can't beat me one-on-one." (5. Walk and talk. Try to get them to go with you.)

Every Sunday, families can choose a different brightly colored card. After all family members view the card, the family talks about:

What does it mean?

Do we believe what the card says?

Can we make it work for our family?

This idea was originally developed by the Urban Families Program at the Center for Urban Studies, College of Urban, Labor & Metropolitan Affairs, Detroit, Michigan. Use their examples, listed here, or come up with your own ideas for positive, family-supportive activities.

For example, one card reads "The best way to teach children is by using praise for their success. Catch your child doing something good. When children hear praise they are more likely to behave well. Hitting, spanking, and other physical punishment teaches children by example that they can hurt others if they're older and bigger."

The power of positive role models is used on another card, which asks:

"What do you do when you have a headache or when you have a bad day? Do you use drugs? As parents, your children are watching you, so think about what you are doing. Are there other choices? Use your parent power to be a good role model for your child."

The cards offer a number of role plays, which convey drug abuse prevention strategies while letting the family be creative and have fun together. In one, (see below, left) the son or daughter plays the "bad guy" and asks the parent (playing a child's role) to come over and have some beer. The card offers ways of responding to the question that can turn the situation around and avoid drug use. Another card asks the parent to play the "bad guy," and the daughter or son plays himself. The role playing is continued until the child feels comfortable "saying no" to drugs.

Another card suggests a different family support principle, community building, while combating drug use. It reads, "Do you know the popular drugs in your neighborhood and what the kids call them?" The card suggests parents ask their kids, teachers, school counselors, and local police officers. Parents should also talk to other parents—especially the parents of their children's friends, and should develop a parent support network, because parents need to talk and exchange information. They can even write the phone numbers on the back of the card.

How To

It's fun and easy to make the cards. This can be a family activity sponsored by your organization or center. You will need: some colorful paper, a plastic photo holder (4" x 6" size, or whatever your drugstore carries), and some magnetic tape.

1. Cut the paper to fit the holder.
2. Write a different activity, idea, resource, or role play on each piece.
3. To mount on a refrigerator, place some magnetic tape on the back of the holder (order from American Science and Surplus, 847/982-0870, or check a local office supply or hardware store).
4. To prop the pack of cards on a kitchen table, glue a stand-up picture frame onto the back of the holder.
5. Put the cards in the holder and use once a week as a family!

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TEN YEARS OF HIPPY

A Family Support Pioneer Looks Back and Shares Her Keys to Success

Eleven years ago, I met a woman at a Columbia University party for students about to complete their graduate work. As we shared our job-search experiences, she said she had heard about an Israeli woman who had developed a home-based program for mothers and their young children, and that this woman wanted to bring the program to the United States. Two weeks later, my bags were packed, and I was on my way to Israel to learn more about the program.

Since then, and until almost one year ago, I have had the privilege of developing a program, building a national network and creating a new not-for-profit educational organization: the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) USA, Inc. The HIPPY program empowers parents as primary educators of their children in the home and fosters parent involvement in school and community life. In doing so, it maximizes the chances of successful early learning experiences.

When I started HIPPY, I had never heard of a family support program, not to mention a national family support movement. Through HIPPY, I spent 10 years working in general education, early childhood education, educational research, social work, adult education, and not-for-profit management organizations. But I never felt quite as comfortable as when I connected with colleagues in the family support field. Over the years, I have developed several principles that have guided me, which I hope can help others.

PRINCIPLE 1

Stay true to your roots, but reach for the sky.

HIPPY was an Israeli import. We started out trying to replicate a proven, fairly prescriptive model of training and program delivery. And, like most program founders, our original Israeli founder believed that the more prescriptive our approach, the more likely we were to succeed. It is almost ridiculous how we struggled over every word, trying to be sure that we were true to the model, trying our hardest to ensure our success.

Once, during a training session, a new program coordinator suggested a slight modification in the role-playing activity

continued on page 16

by Miriam Westheimer, Ed.D

Parents are their children's most important teachers.

that we were engaged in, and asked my opinion. Being a bit more seasoned and relaxed at this point, I said, "Sure, I don't see why not. I mean, this isn't the Bible." Overhearing my response, I was interrupted by one of the veteran coordinators, who corrected me: "Oh, no, you are wrong, Miriam. This here, this IS the Bible!" I was glad that we had such committed program coordinators, who believed so strongly in the value of the program, but the Bible? I became worried that we would get stuck, that we would limit our own ability to grow and learn, and that, by clinging to our roots, we would never let ourselves blossom.

We developed some brand-new materials that allowed for more flexibility and individualization; created a new approach to our training that relied heavily on the reflective process and adult-learning principles; and launched a more locally driven support system for programs, using a decentralization process. The result? Each program looks a bit different; most coordinators feel more comfortable making adaptations when needed; and HIPPY has been able to fit into a great variety of settings, including comprehensive family resource centers, YMCA's, schools, churches, housing development projects, and Head Start centers.

As the American-born daughter of German-Jewish immigrants, I am sensitive to the differences between first- and second-generation leadership models. The two generations have different, but complementary, goals and concerns. The first generation is determined to stay true to its heritage, to its roots; the second generation is eager to adapt and change. The first is concerned with tradition and history; the second is more worried about fitting in and being a part of the whole. The second generation would have no grounding without the first. But the first would have no future without the second.

Today 300 to 400 people from programs that serve 15,000 families gather at the HIPPY USA national conference. We can't sit around a table any more. But the program staff are still committed to getting to know the people with whom they work.

PRINCIPLE 2

Maintain a family-like network, even as you grow.

When we first started, all of the people working with HIPPY could fit around a medium-sized table. Even though we were spread from Little Rock, Dallas, and Tulsa to New York City and from Miami to Cleveland, we all knew each other, many had visited each other's programs, and there was a strong human connection. We were an extended family, and when coordinators ran their programs, they reached out to the participating families with the support and connection of a strong family network behind them.

Today 300 to 400 people from programs that serve 15,000 families gather at the HIPPY USA national conference. We can't sit around a table any more. But the program staff are still committed to getting to know the people with whom they work. National trainers visit each program every year, state networks provide additional training, trainers have their own retreat each year, and the national HIPPY USA conference keeps the human connection strong. It is a constant and difficult struggle—working at the national level, establishing national connections and yet always staying in close touch with the programs, communities, and families

where the work is taking place.

My favorite moment of each of the annual conferences is the day when everyone is arriving at the designated hotel lobby and greeting each other with hugs and kisses. At our 10th anniversary conference, I sat in a big lobby couch, watching as people streamed into the hotel. I felt uncomfortable, even a bit sad, that there were so many people whose names I did not even know. But then I saw them hugging each other, and by watching their embraces I sensed the same warmth that I had felt in all those previous years, and I knew we were still on track.

PRINCIPLE 3

Connect and collaborate. Don't duplicate.

What about a HIPPY program for children under three? What about children after kindergarten? Why not add a heath care component? The home-visiting training is good, but what about training for group meetings? What about a curriculum that teachers could use? These and many other questions came up over the years as practitioners sought to fit HIPPY into an approach that would respond to their communities. I sought to keep the HIPPY piece of the big picture small and well defined. In fact, over the years, the metaphor for HIPPY's place in family support changed: first it was a piece within the family support puzzle, then it was a rock in the clay, then it was a pebble—and then it disappeared among the many different components that communities adopt for serving and strengthening families.

Whatever the metaphor, defining the program model as a discrete, contained unit embedded in a more flexible set of programs and services allowed HIPPY to fit into myriad other systems, such as family support, family literacy, early childhood, and job training, to name just a few. When a new need arises for further program development, I believe strongly that we must first see what is already developed and working and what could dovetail with our program.

HIPPY fits into myriad other systems, such as family support, family literacy, early childhood, and job training, to name just a few.

This may have been the most challenging of the principles to follow. It just doesn't seem to be the American way for programs to collaborate, or to blend and integrate certain features, ending up with something totally different or even—dare I say it?—better. Many of us identify too closely with our own programs, our own brand names, and our own struggles for survival. It is hard work to bring folks together to think differently and creatively, but HIPPY's involvement in such collaboration has resulted in far better services and programs for families with young children.

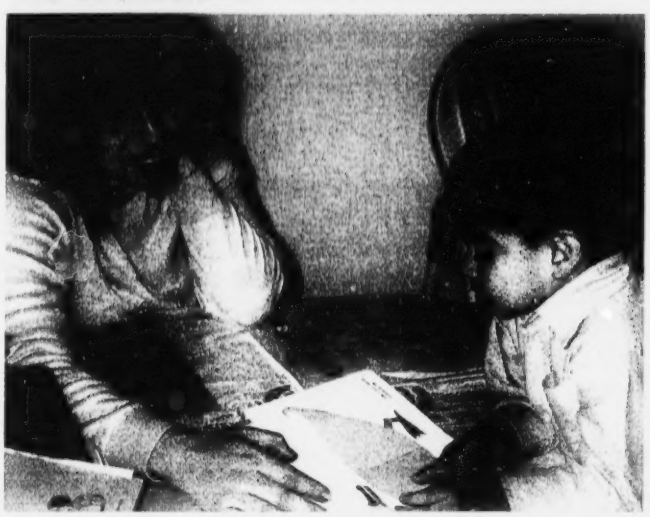
I always reminded myself that the ultimate goal is to help parents in their role as their children's first and most important teachers. It is not to perfect and refine the HIPPY model. If—as we develop, critique, and reflect on our own work—we find different, perhaps better, ways to accomplish our goals, isn't it then our responsibility to change our methods?

PRINCIPLE 4

Take risks.

The day I learned that a U.S. Senator had submitted a drafted bill to the Senate to give money to local HIPPY programs was the day I learned about risks. On the one hand, I knew very well how hard it was for local HIPPY programs to raise money. I knew how excited everyone would be about the potential for this support from the Senate. On the other hand, I knew how many other programs needed help and support. And I knew that it would not be easy to get the other Senators excited enough about family support that they would sign on. So, after many conversations with HIPPY staff and with my col-

HIPPY gives parents a curriculum of activities to combine learning with playing



leagues in the field, I went to Washington D.C. and explained to the Senator's staff that, while we were honored, we did not feel that a HIPPY-specific bill was in the best interests of the field.

And so the dialogue began. After months of discussions, debates, and negotiations with others, what started out as a HIPPY bill became a source of funding for parent resource centers, which now exist in every state. HIPPY is still one of the programs mentioned in the legislation, but the law's implementation and impact are much wider.

Last year, at HIPPY USA's 10-year celebration, I had the opportunity to share these principles with program coordinators, paraprofessionals, parents, and HIPPY USA board members. In that speech, I told many more stories and reminded folks of the road—bumps, scenery, road blocks, wild flowers and all—that we had traveled together. In the midst of our laughter and our tears, I encouraged them to keep these principles in mind as they continue on with their important work. I am grateful for the opportunity to share these thoughts with my family support colleagues.

Miriam Westheimer lives in New York City with her husband and two young children and is now working as an independent consultant with a strong connection to the field of family support and education. She is a member of FRCA.

New interactive software turns the *How Are We Doing?* self-assessment kit from a family support essential into a state-of-the art computer tool. Still based on the principles of family support practice, this kit lets you measure your successes in strengthening and supporting families, and make a plan for improvement using specific benchmarks.

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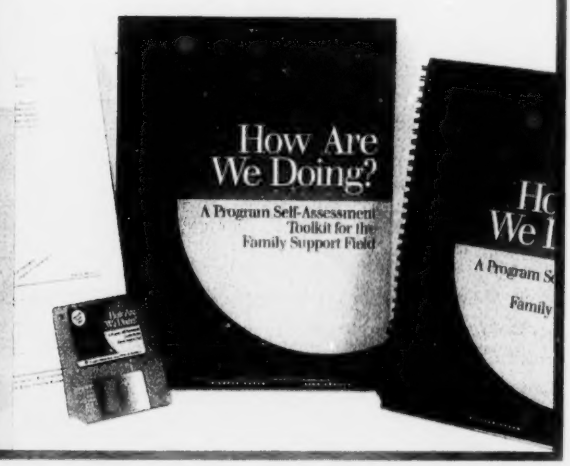
A Program Self-Assessment Toolkit for the Family Support Field



Forging Equal Partnerships

By Nilofer Ahsan

Overview

Welcome to this special focus section on parent leadership and family involvement. Respectful and equal partnerships between staff and families have always been at the heart of the family support approach.

These partnerships are reflected not only in the way services are provided, but in how they are planned, implemented, and evaluated. By involving parents not just as service recipients, but also as designers and deliverers of service, family support programs act as models for the burgeoning movement to involve parents in the design and governance of human service systems in general. Systems change cannot be left to a handful of researchers, practitioners, or reform-minded state agency staff members.

States across the nation have shown that developing effective strategies for involving families is of paramount importance to their reform agendas. Just as involving families in designing family support programs improves program outcomes, effective family involvement in systems reform makes the system more responsive, more cost-effective, more culturally sensitive, and more coordinated. Furthermore, it provides families with leadership and skill-building opportunities that enable them to better utilize services, help other families, and ultimately become leaders and advocates for their communities.

There are still many questions—from state policymakers, members of collaborative bodies, community-based programs, and individual family members—about how this paradigm can be implemented in organizations and neighborhoods, let alone suffuse the human services system. In this issue of *America's Family Support Magazine*, we focus on strategies for family support programs to build parent partnerships, and on how to leverage these partnerships to build human service systems that work better for children and families.

Family Involvement at the Program Level

Family support programs have always been leaders in developing partnerships with parents as they determine the family's strengths and service needs. In addition, especially in recent years, many have found innovative ways to involve parents in program design and service delivery and to help parents become leaders in their communities.

Supporting parent involvement and leadership is full of challenges, and many programs struggle with basic questions about how to involve parents at the programmatic level, including:

- How to build the trusting relationships with parents that are necessary for working as partners
- How to best involve families in decisions about what services and activities are provided; how they are provided; and how they are evaluated, funded, and governed
- How to engage families as concrete resources and supports to each other—not only as peer supports and mentors, but also as paid providers of services, leaders, and advocates

- How to engage parents in leadership roles in programs while giving them the experiences, skills, and supports to become leaders at the community, state, and national levels

Family Leadership in Broader Initiatives

The family support field needs to support efforts to create equal partnerships among family members, direct service providers, and policymakers in designing health, education, and human services systems. Several basic questions must be answered in this process:

- How can those currently running human service systems become convinced that parental involvement is a crucial component of making these systems more effective?
- What infrastructure changes are needed to create meaningful opportunities for parents to contribute to the design and delivery of human services?
- How can families be encouraged and supported to become and stay involved in decision making at the systems level?
- How can the families involved be supported to be sure that they are effective leaders at the systems level?

Many questions and challenges remain in building meaningful family involvement opportunities. This issue of *America's Family Support Magazine* examines some of these questions and challenges, highlights programs and parent leaders who are overcoming obstacles, and provides links to resources and tools that are useful in developing meaningful family involvement.

Nilofer Ahsan *is Director of Knowledge and Policy at FRCA and is Consulting Editor of* America's Family Support Magazine.

It is a sine qua non of family support programs that parents take a leadership role and participate in all aspects of the program, including governance.

—Virginia L. Mason, Executive Director, FRCA

Practitioners should involve community representatives in a process that assigns them equal decision-making power regarding program development and allocation of resources. The community must be viewed as an equal partner.

—Ruth E. Zambrana, Ph.D., Director, Center for Child Welfare, George Mason University

Roles for Families as Leaders

Family support programs can offer parents a range of opportunities to become involved and build leadership capacity. Below are just a few examples of roles that families can play in designing programs and services. These are excerpted from *Making Room at the Table*, published by FRCA in 1998.

- Members of task forces
- Advisory board members
- Program evaluators
- Co-trainers for preservice or inservice sessions
- Paid program staff
- Paid program or policy consultants
- Mentors for other families
- Grant reviewers
- Participants in the needs assessment process
- Reviewers of audiovisual and written materials
- Group facilitators
- Witnesses at hearings
- Community advocates
- Participants in focus groups
- Members of committees hiring new staff
- Fundraisers
- Members of boards of trustees
- Participants at conferences and working meetings
- Participants in quality improvement initiatives

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Who Best Represents the Voice of Parents?

By Roxy Foster

You're planning a new program, and your guidelines state that half of the planning team must be parent representatives. Where do you find these parents? And how do you make sure their involvement is enriching for them and the program?

A debate has taken hold of the family support field. If one of the keys to successful program planning is parent involvement, who are these parents, and how are they to be involved? Many programs are perplexed by the proliferation of terms used to describe parents and their various capacities: we hear parents as advisors, parent leaders, parent advocates, professional parents, and professionals as parents.

During the planning phase of the project it is important to clearly define the roles of all partners. What strategies need to be developed so that parents communicate with and truly represent their communities? What does the planning group expect from that communication link? What support do parents need in order to engage with other parents and help get their input? How does the group provide adequate orientation and transitions?

Planning groups need to answer these questions. And above all, they must be wary of unrealistic expectations: Parent representatives cannot represent all parents.

"Seasoned" Parent Representatives

When an organization recruits parents to participate in program design and implementation, it may be looking for "seasoned" parents—volunteers or paid outreach workers who have experience planning programs and organizing or communicating with many other local parents. Such parents speak the language of the organization, know why they are being asked to the table, and understand the group's expectations of them. For these reasons, recruiting seasoned parents can make parent involvement easier for an agency. The program may feel the parent perspective is being provided and move along to meet other program needs.

But program participants may not feel that these parents effectively represent their interests. No parent can represent all parents' interests. Organizations also may choose as representatives certain parents who will tell them what they want to hear. This is not the point of parent involvement quotas. The point is to involve parents who truly speak for the community—who represent minority and majority voices and will therefore ensure that the program ends up serving the entire community's needs and utilizing its resources.

Transition of New Parents

The transition between the planning and implementation phases can bring new problems. The organization may or may not recognize that during the planning, the group has adopted a language or culture of its own. The organization may expect those entering the process, including new parent representatives, to understand that nuanced language and culture.

Parents face a number of challenges: They are expected to keep up with the current language and culture of the planning or implementation group if they want to contribute in a meaningful way. The knowledge and time they have spent can work against them. They must carefully craft what they say and do, rather than giving spontaneous

input in response to their instincts about what is right for their families and for the community. They may be viewed by other parents leaders from the outside as part of the system. On the other hand, professionals in the planning group may view them as having their own agendas, because their interest in the outcomes of the program is more personal than that of the professionals involved. Parents' interest springs from the needs of their own families and communities—and from their own personal needs. Professionals may not see that parents' dedication to shaping the program so that it achieves positive outcomes for their own families represents strong dedication to the vision of the program.

The Problem of Representation

Programs often assume that the parents at the table have time to take the information they gather during planning meetings and conversations with others in the group back to their neighborhoods, and to gather the ideas of parents and bring them to the group. In reality, formal and informal relationships with other parents may be very limited due to parents' time constraints and family, neighborhood, and work obligations. The days of hanging over the fence with your neighbor have long gone, and unlike professional program planners, parents do not have a water cooler around which to gather to discuss what happened at the meeting.

Successful Parent Involvement

When developing a new initiative or developing evaluation tools for existing work, the question around vested interests or agendas could help define who should be working together and how. Each organization and program has a mission, a carefully crafted statement that gives direction and purpose to its work. Each individual who is invited to the table to fulfill the mission of the organization needs to compare that mission with his or her own vested interest, whether it be a personal interest or the interest of the organization that he or she represents.

The Council for Parent Leadership, a pilot project of the Minnesota Parenting Association in partnership with the Minnesota STATES Initiative/Family Support Minnesota, has developed questions to help parents and organizations generate meaningful parent involvement in planning and carrying out programs.

Questions for Parents

Why was I asked to participate, and what perspective am I supposed to represent?

What perspective do I truly represent?

Who are the current and past partners at the table?

How will I be expected to bring information to and from the community or organization I represent?

Does this work fit into my personal or professional life, and how do I define each?

Can I fulfill commitments that are expected of me? (Do I have conflicts with meeting times? Can I commit the number of months or years in the term of service?)

Are supports such as orientation, translation, transportation, and childcare available if I need them?

Will my involvement advance my skills and understanding?

Does this organization respect diversity of views, and are its members flexible enough to change their course without losing sight of their vision and mission?

Will my participation be valued?

Steps for Programs

These steps should be taken with any potential member of the planning group, not just parent representatives.

1. Provide written materials that state:
   - Clearly defined vision, mission, and purpose
   - Name and description of each person currently on the planning team
   - Descriptions of specific areas of work, subcommittees, task forces, etc.
   - The group's reason for asking the potential member to participate, including the perspective you expect him or her to contribute
   - Times of meetings
   - Length of terms of service

Continuum of Parent Participation

Engagement	Involvement	Empowerment
Outreach	Orientation	Evaluation
One-on-one trust building	Training	Assessments
Invitation	Recognition	Personal power to create change
Exploration	Education	

- Commitments, if any, to providing childcare, transportation, and reimbursement of expenses

2. Explain the process in place for recruitment, selection, and orientation of planning team members.
3. Follow up with each person to answer questions. This could be done by a person in the group who shares interests with the potential member, such as a fellow parent or fellow social worker.
4. Clarify within your organization specifically how it will receive and process planning group participants' requests for supports such as transportation, childcare, translators, and reimbursements for expenses.
5. Provide communication strategies for everyone. Some parents do not have phones, fax machines, or e-mail. Develop strategies to keep them informed.
6. When working with families, use a defined process to nurture their leadership skills, and develop a set of competencies that they can take with them in the community and back to their families.

Continuum of Parent Participation

Program planning teams can foster productive, respectful involvement in program planning by supporting three phases of development for those who are newly involved:

Engagement

As an organization fosters parent engagement with the planning effort, it is important for the organization to know the entire community as well as the seasoned parents within the community. The organization should focus on engaging parent representatives in outreach efforts and one-on-one trust-building activities with other parents. During this period of invitation, parents decide for themselves whether program planning is something in which they want to be involved. Through exploration, families weigh the benefits of their participation for their families and community, decide if the organization is sincere about the potential outcomes of their participation, and judge whether they have knowledge to contribute.

Involvement

During the involvement period, the organization provides orientation and training for parents. Expectations and commitments are clearly outlined, and information is provided in a non-threatening manner. The organization accepts that support and education are universal needs for all parents, recognizes that all parents have strengths, and develops training to build on those strengths. Conflicts are viewed as a part of growth and the development of understanding. Through this phase, parents develop recognition of the benefits of participation in the planning. Parents have access to new information and learn new skills in decision making and conflict resolution. Parents can trust that the education and information exchange is truthful and accurate.

Empowerment

During the empowerment period, the organization values the role of parents by involving them in evaluation and assessment. Parents' input is sought using an equal partnership approach, and is not sought to simply endorse the organization's own ideas. The group accepts and weighs multiple views when making decisions. Parents use their new skills and the information they have learned to make an impact on the lives of their family and community. Parents recognize personal power to create change within themselves and those around them, adding to their own bank of personal skills as they enter each new area of involvement.

Roxy Foster is Executive Director of the Minnesota Parenting Association (MPA). MPA is a partner in the STATES Initiative/Family Support Minnesota. Through the creation of the Council for Parent Leadership, efforts are underway in the state to identify parent leadership training programs and models to foster parents' skill building and development as partners in systems change efforts. For more information, contact MPA at 651/290-4755, mpacpl@yahoo.com.

The culturally competent organization values diversity, conducts cultural self-assessments, is conscious of and manages the dynamics of difference, institutionalizes cultural knowledge, and adapts services to fit the cultural diversity of the community served.

— Terry Cross, Director, National Indian Child Welfare Association

Parent Leadership Training Programs

By Susan Baum

It is crucial that parents make their voices heard in the making of laws, programs, and systems that affect their families. Only families themselves can articulate the real challenges and needs they experience every day, and how laws, programs, and service systems can help.

But many parents do not have the skills to step into new leadership roles, or do not have the confidence to present themselves as experts to policymakers and other professionals who dominate the arenas of lawmaking and systems change. Many view the political system as too complex, distant, or even corrupt to be impacted through individual efforts.

Across the country, parent leadership training programs are helping parents develop the skills and experiences they need in order to have a voice in public policy. Family support programs are linking with leadership training programs to help parents make a difference in the services and policies that affect their nation, communities, children, and families.

Described below are a small selection of the many diverse parent training programs that are emerging rapidly across the nation. There is no one training curriculum that is appropriate for all communities or situations. Programs vary in length, scope, and approach, but they all share a common vision: To give parents the tools they need in order to make their voices heard.

Community Organizing And Family Issues
2748 North Southport
Chicago, IL 60614
Phone: 773/477-3847
Fax: 773/477-4333
Ellen Schumer, Executive Director

Founded in 1994, Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) helps parents build their leadership capacity in order to impact change in their schools and communities and to be the kind of parents and people they want to be. Working from the principle that building strong families is an important aspect of building strong communities, COFI partners with local community groups to provide leadership training that links personal, family, and community development.

Parents spend the first stage of training discussing their personal and family goals and their vision for the community. Parents who participate in COFI model training develop their leadership capacity at three levels: at the personal level, as family leaders, and as community members. This first phase of training, Leadership Basics, is comprised of an orientation session followed by five two-hour workshops. Parent action teams are formed by people completing the workshops; these teams work together for three to six months to achieve goals derived from their vision of a family-friendly community. Members of parent action teams have:

- Participated in classrooms as teacher aides
- Organized family festivals
- Helped create programs providing English as a Second Language, GED preparation, and computer skills

The second phase of the training, Community Outreach and Visioning, focuses on achieving bigger goals and building a constituency to help achieve those goals. Parents participate in four two-hour workshops where they learn methods of community outreach. They then conduct door-to-door outreach to build relationships within the community and involve other parents and stakeholders in making the community more supportive of families. With this expanded constituency, participants work together to achieve three to five longer-term goals. Participants have:

- Opened schools after hours as community centers
- Developed and generated resources for new programs for children and families
- Taken on significant community leadership roles, such as sitting on community planning committees

In the third phase, Parent Leaders as Organizers, COFI supports, mentors, and trains parents as they become trainers themselves (conducting phase one and two training) or as they participate in a cross-neighborhood Parent Policy Committee to improve their communities. COFI provides staff support to parent leaders who staff school-based community centers in planning programs, developing operating policies, and securing resources. COFI also extends support to parent leaders who participate in the governance structures of larger community-building initiatives.

Community-based workshops and training are publicized as widely as possible; parents' participation is voluntary. Free childcare and refreshments are provided.

COFI's nontraditional model of community organizing has helped over 800 low-income families in Chicago become successful advocates and leaders for themselves and their communities.

Linking Our Voices
Head Start Bureau
Switzer Building
330 C Street SW, Room 2224
Washington, DC 20447
Phone: 202/205-8399
Fax: 202/401-5916
E-Mail: fgibson@acf.dhhs.gov
Web: www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb
Frankie Hoover Gibson, Parent Involvement Program Specialist

Parent involvement in decision making is the cornerstone of all Head Start programs. In 1997, the Head Start Bureau introduced Linking Our Voices (LOV), a video-based program used to train parents and community representatives who are active in Head Start Policy Councils. Members of these councils promote and support parents in getting involved as decision makers and primary educators of their children through local Head Start programs. The policy groups are part of the larger Head Start planning and governing mechanisms. At least 51 percent of policy group members must be elected parents with children currently enrolled in the program. Community representatives, including former Head Start parents, may comprise the remaining 49 percent.

The goals and objectives of the Linking Our Voices training program are to:

- Recruit parents and community representatives as Policy Council members
- Orient new Policy Council members
- Provide ongoing training of Policy Council members

continued on page 26

Parent Training Programs

A Parent's Perspective

Nancy Santiago, Chicago, Illinois

Mother of 2 children. Received Community Organizing Training from the West Town Leadership Project.

We went out in the community to survey as a group, as a team. We did 676 interviews in the heat, rain, and cold—nothing stopped us. We interviewed senior citizens. We went to health clinics and interviewed people in the waiting room. We talked to eighth graders, guidance counselors, and teachers at [Von Humboldt] school. We even talked to gangbangers. What we didn't dare do by ourselves, we did together.

We asked, "What are the best things in the community?" The majority picked churches, schools, and community organizations. Then we asked what needed to change. We heard a call for more cops in the streets, for more clean-ups, and to stop all the shooting and hitting of kids. We heard a need for job training and to help kids do better in school. We really heard how people feel about the community.

After all the surveys were finished, we held a meeting with parents, community leaders, and politicians. We read [the surveys] out loud. Then we talked about what we needed to do for our community. We called ourselves the Von Humboldt Madres Reporteras [Mother Reporters]. We set three goals: to increase students' test scores, to improve community safety, and to help people in the community get into job training programs.

Our next goal is to open a community center at Von Humboldt. We want to create a safe haven for kids after school, and offer programs in adult education, job training, and tutoring for children and adults.

At first I was shy. I wouldn't dare talk to anybody, but then I said, "Let's give it a shot." Now I'm a new Local School Council member, and a leader in Madres Reporteras. I know we will succeed.

Reprinted with permission from COFI's 2nd Annual Report on the West Town Leadership Project.

Nancy Santiago

Baum, continued from page 25

- Supplement the training of Head Start governing bodies, staff, and all parents to make sure they participate in shared decision making with Policy Council members
- Provide information to community agencies and public schools about the key role of parents and community representatives in all Head Start policy and procedural decisions

The Linking Our Voices training, available in English and Spanish, includes a 22-minute video and printed materials. A facilitator's manual contains detailed instructions for four workshops (which normally take from 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 hours each):

- Music to My Ears engages participants in seeing the benefits of Policy Council membership to their lives, families, Head Start programs, and communities.
- Having a Voice focuses on the roles and responsibilities of Policy Council members in relation to those of the Head Start governing body and staff.
- Three-Part Harmony explores the processes of shared decision making in local Head Start programs.
- Theme Songs guides participants in identifying the concerns and issues on which their involvement will be focused in the coming year. During the training, participants select issues and then campaign for support for these issues among the larger body of parents.

Members of Head Start Policy Councils who participate in Linking Our Voices meet new people and build new skills. They gain experience exchanging ideas and negotiating as a team to make decisions that impact their children, families, and communities. Membership in the Head Start Policy Council is often a life-altering experience for both parents and community representatives.

Partners In Policymaking

New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
155 Washington Avenue
Second Floor
Albany, NY 12210
Phone: 800/395-3372
Fax: 518/402-3505
Web: www.ddpc.state.ny.us
Sheila M. Carey, Executive Director

Partners in Policymaking provides training and skill building to individuals with disabilities, parents, care givers and family members. The program enables them to advocate for their own rights and empowers them to become active in policymaking with respect to specific projects. Participants get acquainted and connect with organizations, opportunities, and other resources as they learn about current disability issues at the local, state, and national levels. The goal is to achieve a productive partnership between policymakers and those in need of disability-oriented services and support.

People with disabilities and their families are encouraged to apply for the training. A planning committee establishes specific criteria to be used in the selection process, which may vary depending on the location and purpose of the project.

The training, modeled after a successful program created by the Minnesota Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, typically consists of three to eight sessions conducted over weekends. Sessions include a brief history of developmental disabilities; information on the parent, self-advocacy, and independent living center movements; and an overview of leadership strategies and approaches.

Additional training sessions may include presentations on the legislative process, education, health, housing, recreation, transportation, the history of the consumer movement, using technology to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, and family supports. Participants are also provided with a listing of their local, state and federal government representatives. The training is reinforced with role playing techniques.

Approximately six months after the completion of the training, an initial follow-up survey is conducted to assess the impact the project had on each individual's involvement, awareness, and access to services and supports. The training includes additional follow-up with participants, including surveys and reunions.

Graduates are able to convey issues and concerns faced by people with disabilities to educators, service providers, and health care experts in a way that is understandable and calls for solutions. Participants are encouraged to become more active on school boards, planning committees and other advisory groups and to become leaders in their communities.

To date, more than 1,000 individuals have completed the Partners in Policymaking training. In 1999, New York's Governor Pataki allocated an additional $150,000 to the program in recognition of its success.

The Right Question Project, Inc.

2464 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 314
Cambridge, MA 02140
Phone: 617/492-1900
Fax: 617/492-1950
Web: www.rightquestion.org
Luz Santana, Director of Training

Right Question Project strengthens the democratic process by teaching people to participate more effectively in making decisions that affect them.

continued on page 27

Baum, continued from page 26

Since 1991, the Right Question Project, Inc. (RQP) has been helping parents develop the skills in formulating questions and thinking critically that they need in order to be involved in decisions that affect their children's education. Parents trained in the program practice the Question Formulation Technique, which can be applied to multiple issues affecting their families and communities.

Parents using the RQP methodology play three specific roles: supporters of their children's education, monitors of their children's educational progress, and advocates for their children's needs.

The work of RQP has evolved from using a standard curriculum to using more flexible methodology and techniques for building specific skills. In the curriculum Using Questions to Get the Best Education for Your Child, parents learn how to support, monitor, and advocate for their children's education through the art of asking the right questions and getting answers to these questions. Another RQP curriculum teaches parents about educational standards, assessment, and accountability, passing on information that helps them to be more confident and assertive in asking questions on these subjects. In the Health Curriculum, parents learn how to build more effective partnerships with their health care providers.

Sessions are facilitated by parents, school staff, community organizers, and others. Facilitators are recruited from among members and staff of organizations that share the goal of increasing effective parent involvement. RQP trains them to use the curricula. Facilitators and the organizations from which they come make a commitment to implementing the curriculum with parents. Sessions can range from one session to a series of workshops.

Parents report that participating in RQP training has helped them to develop:

- A better understanding of complex issues, systems, institutions, and decision-making processes
- Confidence in their capacity to advocate on behalf of their children, families, and communities
- Skills that enable them to participate more effectively in decision-making processes that affect their children
- The ability to manage anger and to communicate more effectively with teachers, school personnel, health care providers, and others
- The desire to share what they have learned with other parents

Parent Leadership Training Institute
Connecticut Commission on Children
18-20 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860/240-0290
Fax: 860/240-0248
E-mail: ruth.sales@po.state.ct.us
Web: www.state.ct.us/coc/
Elaine Zimmerman, Executive Director, Connecticut Commission on Children
Ruth Sales, Program Director for Statewide PLTI Initiative

Since 1993, the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) has been helping parents become leading advocates for children. It teaches parents who wish to improve the lifelong health, safety, and learning of children how to become practiced agents for change. PLTI creates new voices for children by bringing in

continued on page 28

Parent Training Programs

A Parent's Perspective

Thomas and Lisa Reynolds, Norwich, Connecticut

Parents of five children. Train other parents in program planning and governance using Making Room at the Table *(1998, FRCA). Are members of FRCA.*

Lisa: Parent training is a lot like potato chips: you can't stop after one. It is so invigorating, you want to go out to do it again and again. It's incredibly rewarding. And we are able to bring our children with us, so they can see what it means to get involved as a family. I like the way Making Room at the Table challenges people to be active in family involvement and family support.

Thomas: For me to get up in front of people and start conducting parent training was foreign and painful. It was a learning experience for me. But I learned so much. Working with other parents has made me more aware that I need to spend time with my kids. I work a lot. I learned that working nine to five is not what fatherhood is all about. You have to make a commitment.

Lisa: When we train parents, there is usually only one other father in the group. It's good that Thomas is there to support him and promote father involvement.

Lisa Reynolds

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A Parent's Perspective

Anna Green, Spring Lake, North Carolina

Mother of two children. Obtained training through the Office of Substance Abuse Community Partnership. Subsequently started the Multicultural Community Development Services organization with other parent leaders.

We used to have a drug-infested neighborhood. I felt we could stop it, that we could break the cycle. We did break the cycle.

Before I got parent leadership training, I wanted to make changes, but didn't understand the system or how to navigate it. I did not understand how to get the system to be more responsive to my needs, and now I do.

I am able to advocate for my special-needs child. I am able to get the services she needs and respite for myself. I feel I am a better parent because I can advocate for my children.

Through my work as a volunteer director at MultiCultural Community Development Services, I can give back what I've learned. I am able to help other families so they don't have to go through what I went through. Now we call ourselves "Parent Guardians of the Service System."

I have learned that families can create power to make changes. There is a role for the professional and also a role for families. They each bring their own strengths. If you build these strengths within the neighborhood, real change will happen.

Anna Green, left, with family.

Baum, continued from page 27

previously ignored stakeholders and training them to become leaders.

Other goals and objectives of PLTI are to:

- Build parents' capacity to offer input into community efforts at the neighborhood, regional, and state levels
- Facilitate systems change through increased parent input in policy and process decisions
- Develop supportive communities of parents in targeted regions of the state who support each other in skills development and successful parent action
- Develop supportive communities of parents within family-friendly initiatives, such as Head Start and Enterprise Zones
- Increase quality children's programs through parent involvement

When PLTI training began, parents were recruited through radio and newspaper advertisements and at schools, churches, and other community resources. Today there are waiting lists, and recruitment is often word-of-mouth. Interested parents apply to PLTI and participate in a one-hour interview.

PLTI utilizes a copyrighted "democracy curriculum" aimed at helping parents become civic leaders for children. There are three phases of training, which use interactive adult learning practices:

1. A retreat to develop the group and define its mission
2. A 10-week course on parent leadership
3. A 10-week study of politics, policy, and media, with a civics practicum in which participants learn together within a community framework

Among other areas, parents develop skills in:

- Understanding group dynamics
- Utilizing language and images for impact

continued on page 29

HELP US HELP YOU!

SUPPORTING FAMILIES LEAVING WELFARE

Is welfare reform impacting families you know? Fill out FRCA's survey and let us know how! The welfare reform survey will enable FRCA to:

- *Show how federal and state policies are affecting family support programs and the families they serve*
- *Identify successful responses to welfare reform*
- *Produce materials to use in educating states and communities*
- *Provide technical assistance to family support programs, agencies, and networks*

You can download the survey at www.frca.org, or call 312/338-0900 x 130 to request a copy. The deadline for returning completed surveys is July 15, 1999.

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Baum continued from page 28

- Working with diversity
- Defining needs
- Assessing and defining problems
- Speaking publicly
- Utilizing the media
- Reviewing child and family data
- Evaluating a program
- Understanding personal history and its impact on self-image and empowerment
- Reaching successful outcomes
- Becoming familiar with state and federal law
- Creating coalitions

Each class of parents mentors the next class, and graduates become part of a growing coalition of parent leaders. Some parent graduates become PLTI teachers, while others serve on boards, guide local and state policy, design programs, organize neighborhoods, improve schools, or take other steps that serve the interests of children.

***Susan Baum** is Project Coordinator for the Family Resource Coalition of America.*

Ensuring that parents remain actively involved in planning and deciding what is best for their children and families stands as one of the most important principles of family support.

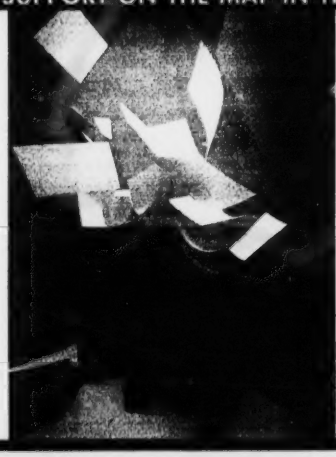
—Virginia L. Mason, Executive Director, FRCA

LIKE WHAT YOU SEE? JOIN FRCA AND GET *AMERICA'S FAMILY SUPPORT MAGAZINE* FOUR TIMES A YEAR—PLUS OTHER BENEFITS! CALL 312/338-0900 TODAY TO JOIN OR SUBSCRIBE.

PRESENTATIONS NEEDED

HELP PUT FAMILY SUPPORT ON THE MAP IN THE NEXT CENTURY

There's still time to send in your proposal to present at America's only national family support conference! Family Support America: Putting Family Support on the Map for the Next Century, the eighth national conference of the Family Resource Coalition of America, will take place April 26-29, 2000.



To receive the call for presentations now, or registration materials this winter, call 312/338-0900, or visit our web site at www.frca.org. Our 2000 conference will feature all-new tracks, nationally renowned speakers, and plenty of chances to celebrate and network with your family support colleagues.

Parent Training Programs

A Parent's Perspective

Migdalia Castro, New Haven, Connecticut

Mother of one child. Obtained training at the Parent Leadership Training Institute.

It was scary to put in the application for the parent leadership training. I did it because people did not see us as professionals—we were just parents. But as soon as we started going to the classes, we realized we were really powerful. It was a super, tremendous experience.

Within yourself, you have the power to affect your family and your community all along, but once you work through it with others like you, you become more aware of it. We learned about our differences. There are no rights and wrongs. No one is judging you. It makes you proud.

Parent leadership taught me to see my daughter as an individual with potential. It taught me how to guide her but not push her. I learned to identify her gifts.

After the training, I was invited to be part of different decision-making boards. Last year, I ran for alderperson in New Haven; I lost by 30 votes.

I will always be an advocate for children and families. I believe that parents have the key role in our communities. They have the power to make decisions and work as change agents. There is a lot people can do. It's about willingness and positive energy.

Migdalia Castro

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Training Program Sampler

There are hundreds of parent leadership training programs nationwide. Here are a few that FRCA has on in its database. To have your program added, contact the FRCA Help Desk at 312/338-0900.

Family Development Training Institute
Provides training for parents of young children.
University of New Mexico
Room B28
Student Services Center
Albuquerque, NM 87131
505/277-6943
Fax: 505/277-6282
E-mail: mjdudley@unm.edu

Family Faculty Program of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Prepares adult family members to teach health care professionals about the experience of health and illness.
Family Relations Department
34th & Civic Center Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215/590-4557
Fax: 215/590-6093
Website:
www.chop.edu/famserv/parpart.htm

Federation for Children with Special Needs: Interagency Coordination Council (ICC)
Parent Leadership Training
1135 Tremont Street
4th Floor
Boston, MA 02120
800/331-0688
617/236-7210
Fax: 617/572-2094
E-mail: fcsninfo@fcsn.org
Website: www.fcsn.org

Parent Advocates for Youth
Enables parents to become effective advocates for policies important to them and their children.
459 Vienna
San Francisco, CA 94112
415/239-0161
Fax: 415/239-0584
E-mail: coleman@sirius.com
Website: www.colemanadvocates.org

Parent Leadership Program
Provides training for parents of children with special needs.
The ARC Michigan
333 South Washington Square
Suite 200
Lansing, MI 48933
800/292-7851 or 517/487-5426
Fax: 517/487-0303
E-mail: arcmi@voyager.net
Website: www.arcmi.org

Parents Anonymous
Provides technical assistance and training on a variety of leadership skills for parents.
675 West Foothill Blvd.
Suite 220
Claremont, CA 91711-3475
909/621-6184
Fax: 909/625-6304
E-mail: parentsanon@msn.com
Website: www.parentsanonymous-natl.org

Parents as Leaders
Provides training for caregivers of children birth-6 years who have special needs.
240 Waisman Center
1500 Highland Avenue
Madison, WI 53706
608/263-6745
Fax: 608/263-0529
E-mail: swedeen@waisman.wisc.edu

Parents As Teachers
Trains parents to be parent educators to work in partnership with the school and community.
10176 Corporate Square Drive
Suite 230
St. Louis, MO 63132
314/432-4330
Fax: 314/432-8963
E-mail: patnc@patnc.org
Website: www.patnc.org

Rainmakers
Provides parent leadership training; mostly low-income parents.
1420 Washington Avenue
Miami Beach, FL 33139
305/674-7805, 305/675-8557
Fax: 305/534-2741

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Parents As Family Support Staff: A Win-Win-Win Situation

By Jeanne Williams

Employing parents in family support programs can benefit everyone involved. Parents win when they are able to demonstrate and build on their skills and talents. Programs win when their staff are familiar with and enthusiastic about family support and demonstrate their appreciation and respect for what participants have to offer. And program participants win when they see a peer become a leader and a paid staff member. Parents who are hired as staff can be a motivating force and strong role models for other parents. Family support programs in communities across the nation are providing parents with opportunities to become hired staff. Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, has made hiring former participants a priority. According to Sheila Beasley-Sims, Director of the Family Support Policy Board in Allegheny County, hiring parents is "the next logical step as parents grow and acquire skills." For parents who are new or returning to the work force, Beasley-Sims says paid work or volunteering at a family support program "is an opportunity ... to make a natural and easy transition into the world of work without stigma or resistance."

Beasley-Sims hired Annette Harris Thomas, a parent at the Clairton Family Center, as a consultant to coordinate a project that involved legislators visiting family support programs. Throughout the project, she was impressed by Thomas's level of professionalism. Both are convinced that hiring a consultant from another source could not have produced better results. Thomas is now employed full time as Data Coordinator for three Early Head Start Family Support Centers.

McArdle was responsible for developing activities to fit each child in the program. She also used the opportunity to motivate parents to continue with Even Start.

Helping Parents Succeed as Employees

Family support programs must give parents support as they make the transition from participant to staff member. Parents will need training and supervision to help them to develop confidence about their work and their role as a member of the staff team. Staff can help parents make the transition successfully by reinforcing their strengths and helping them to see how important their assets are to the operation of the program and participants.

Drawing the line between the personal and the professional with other parents is one of the most difficult things for many parents to master when they are hired. Parents often need training and/or supervision that focuses on the importance of maintaining confidentiality and avoiding over-identification with the concerns of families. The amount of attention to be dedicated to these issues varies according to the needs of specific parents, just as the need for support on particular issues varies among family support staff in general.

Parents Who Have Made a Difference

When Justine McArdle joined the Highlands Family Center in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, she thought of it as solely a resource for her children. As she became more involved in activities, she realized that the center was a

good resource for her as well. The Site Director recommended her to serve as the center's representative on the county-wide Family Support Policy Board. Her responsibilities included representing a parent's perspective on this board, which included administrators, legislators, funders, and other family support program participants. She attended quarterly meetings and reported back to the Highlands Family Center staff and participants about the goals and activities of the board.

McArdle's love of learning led her to join the Even Start program offered through her center. While most of the adult participants in Even Start were working toward a GED (General Equivalency Diploma), McArdle simply wanted to refresh skills and knowledge that she hadn't tested since high school graduation. The Even Start program had an opening for a part-time Children's Coordinator, and McArdle's Family Development Specialist at the center encouraged her to apply. She got the job and kept it for two years. It eventually grew into a full-time position accompanied by Family Center Aide duties. She was responsible for developing activities to fit each child in the program. She also used the opportunity to motivate parents to continue with Even Start.

Last year, McArdle began seeking a new position in order to increase and develop her skills. She now manages a database of substitute teachers for the county's school districts. The job allows her to build on her love of computers. McArdle is now in her forth semester of a Teaching Education program at the Community College. She hopes to teach autistic children eventually.

When Jacqualynn James moved into the Duquesne community in Allegheny County, she was looking for a professional résumé writer. A neighbor told her that the staff of the Duquesne Family Support Center could probably help. Her Family Development Specialist at the center helped her with the content and structure of her résumé, as well as with style.

James grew to see the bigger picture, the vision of family support in Allegheny County. "I recognized that there was a place in it for me," she recalls.

The democratic parent governance structure at the center appealed to this former political science student. As she and her children became more involved, she was asked to join the county-wide Family Support Policy Board. As a parent representative, James was able to see to see the bigger picture, the vision of family support across Allegheny County. "I recognized that there was a place in it for me," she recalls.

Justine McArdle's Family Development Specialist encouraged her to apply for the position of part-time Children's Coordinator. She got the job and kept it for two years.

James became an AmeriCorps[1] volunteer and took on a part-time position with the Consumer Health Coalition, where she was responsible for building the consumer base of the group. James also became active in Community Voices, a county-wide family support parent group. When the leader of this group decided to step down, James took on those responsibilities as well.

Eventually, James moved into a paid AmeriCorps position, funded through Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, supervising AmeriCorps workers at family support programs. Since the Consumer Health Coalition and Community Voices work were both funded by the same source, James and her supervisor agreed that she could merge the two jobs.

Under James's direction, the scope and magnitude of Community Voices increased significantly in one year. The group now works with a set agenda, set goals, and active committees. James's objective for Community Voices is to develop the leadership capacity of members so that they can develop grassroots efforts in their own family support programs and communities. Recognizing the accomplishments of the group, James successfully argued for an increase in her salary.

She credits her involvement in the center with giving her the skills and confidence to advocate for herself, and she credits her ability to understand both the policy side and the community side of family support with her success.

James says being able to build effective relationships is necessary in order for parents to make the most of their experiences within family support programs and beyond. She has been able to do this with her Site Director, Family Development Specialist, mentor, and supervisors. James feels an obligation to

support and encourage other young women and even take them under her wing if necessary. "I feel an obligation as a woman, as a black woman, and as a member of the community," she says.

The experiences of parent staff in Allegheny County serve as encouragement for other family support programs to go beyond recognizing the strengths of parent participants to seeing them as peers. Parents who possess the skills and talents to work in paid positions in family support programs should be strongly considered by those hiring. They can be a great asset to any staff team as long as they are supported and appreciated.

For more information on parent employment in Allegheny County programs, contact Jeanne Williams at University of Pittsburgh, Office of Child Development, 5600 Penn Avenue Suite 208, Pittsburgh PA 15206, 412/661-9280 (phone), 412/661-9288 (fax).

NOTE

[1]AmeriCorps is the national service program that helps people of all ages and backgrounds pay for education in exchange for community service.

Jeanne E. Williams, *M.P.A., is Family Support Training Coordinator at the University of Pittsburgh's Office of Child Development. She is responsible for developing and presenting training for the staff of the 23 family support programs in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. She is a member of FRCA.*

Strengthening and enhancing families, which must become an imperative in the work to be done, will require a strong commitment to training helpers who are highly skilled in the application of knowledge about power, diversity, and human systems.

—Elaine Pinderhughes, Ph.D., Professor and Chairperson, Clinical Sequence, School of Social Work, Boston College

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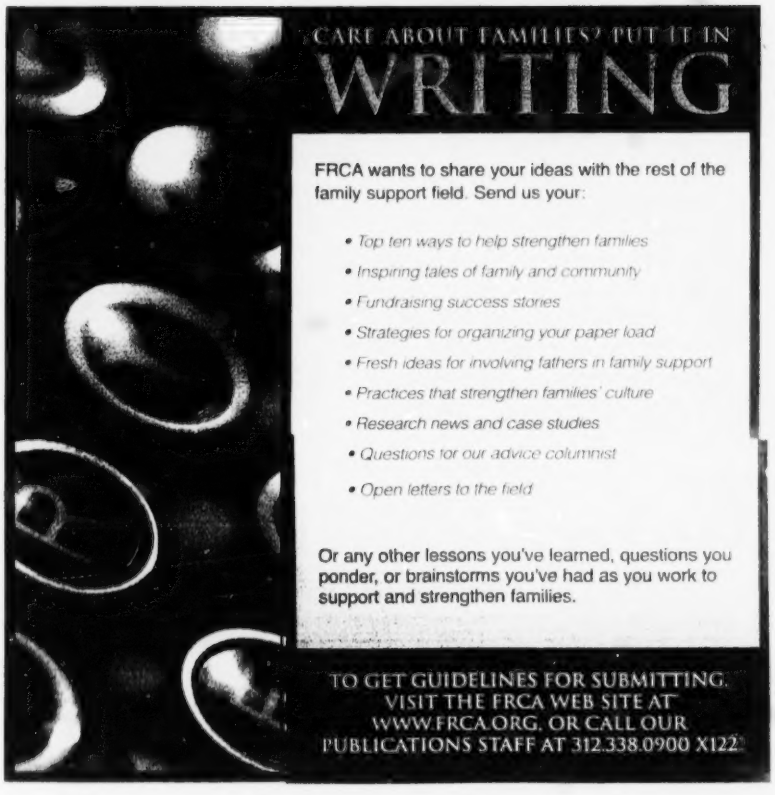
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• Practices that strengthen families' culture
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• Questions for our advice columnist
• Open letters to the field
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How to Maintain Family Involvement

By Aubrey Spriggs

Parents who become leaders in family support initiatives have motivations for doing so and expectations for what they will do and achieve. Those who facilitate parent involvement can help parents fulfill their own goals and expectations.

They should provide correct and sufficient information on the specifics of parents' involvement. They should connect parents with tasks or jobs that will make satisfy them and make good use of their talents. And they should compensate parents in a personally meaningful way.

Tips for Facilitators

When families are first recruited, ask them what would make participation easiest for them, what they hope to gain from involvement, and what skills they bring to the initiative. Provide families with options from which they may choose, but be open to suggestions that parents have for their participation options. Check in with parents periodically to see if they wish to be reassigned to a different sort of task.

There are several steps to making sure parent leaders have a satisfying experience:

1. Remove the barriers.
The most obvious barrier to parent leadership is the concrete barrier. Ensure that all sites—all places to which parents will need to go in order to fulfill their roles as leaders—are accessible. There should be transportation that is reliable, that is safe, and that operates at all necessary hours. Lack of safety can be a barrier: make sure meetings are not held in high-crime locations or in gang territory, and that parents don't need to cross gang territory to reach a meeting. Meetings can be rotated among different areas in the neighborhood, perhaps among participants' homes.

Meeting times should not conflict with parents' work hours, or with childcare availability. The program or initiative may wish to write into its by-laws that a certain number of family participants must be present before a meeting can begin.

Family-related barriers to involvement must also be considered. For example, parents can be invited to bring their families to meetings, or childcare can be provided. Also, stipends to cover transportation and other participation expenses prevents money issues from blocking participation.

Beyond concrete obstacles, there are also psychological barriers. Parents must not be intimidated by the process or by other participants with whom they may not be used to interacting as equals, including business leaders, employment supervisors, and social service professionals.

Prepare residents by helping them develop their meeting skills, including assertiveness and compromise. Go over materials with parents that bolster their knowledge in needed areas, such as social service techniques and meeting processes. Finally, as parents become accustomed to participating, equal time and weight must be granted to their opinions and to the opinions of professionals.

2. Provide general supports.
Beyond removing barriers to participation, family support initiatives should provide general supports to parent leaders and professionals working with them. Be flexible in arranging schedules, meeting locations, attendance requirements, the variety of roles available, and job- or task-sharing among individuals.

Parents may be encouraged to share jobs and meeting attendance requirements, so that they can work out problems with time constraints and also get experience with more tasks. However, these arrangements may decrease parents' sense of ownership over their tasks and lessen their familiarity with issues involved in the initiative.

Work groups, including community residents, should be provided with technical assistance upon request. This can help participants value each other's contributions, help them learn ways to resolve conflicts, and maximize their use of all participants' skills and knowledge.

Finally, parent leaders should receive supervision, so that they can get feedback on their work and find ways to increase their effectiveness and their own satisfaction. Parent input can be used in the supervision and evaluation of other parent leaders and of professionals involved in the initiative.

3. Provide meaningful activities for participation.

For parents to continue their involvement in any initiative, they need to feel that their work is meaningful. Ask families about the type of work they want to do when they become involved, and try to fulfill those requests as much as possible.

Give parents meaningful tasks that are visibly attached to some outcome which is important to them. Don't just ask parents to stuff envelopes. Entrust them with work that is as complex and important as that which professionals do, sending a strong message that their contribution is every bit as meaningful. Give a range of participation options with different time requirements, individual versus group work contexts, and educational level required.

Finally, be sure to link residents with jobs that utilize their skills, so that parents are likely to experience success and to not be overwhelmed by the task.

4. Provide compensation.

Just as different parents find different tasks rewarding, they also differ in the types of compensation they find rewarding. Provide a variety of compensations. Use gatherings and parties to provide families with social and relationship-building opportunities and recognition for their work. To foster neighborhood cohesion and excitement, sponsor rallies.

Give parents access to institutions and resources outside the neighborhood through an exchange of favors. For example, give museum employees access to parenting education or recreational activities in exchange for free admission for parents leaders at the museum. Provide links to education and training, so that parents can improve their skills and their lives, and climb the career ladder.

Recognize each participant's particular expertise in his or her neighborhood—do not discount anyone's opinion. Find ways to compensate parents through salaries, stipends, expense reimbursement, and in-kind reimbursement.

Finally, have food at every meeting. Food helps people enjoy each other's company and talk as equals, as well as providing nourishment and energy for the work to be done.

Adapted from an article written for the St. Louis Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative, which provides social services and community economic development efforts for targeted neighborhoods. Recommendations suggested here are loosely based on the original article, and do not necessarily pertain to that initiative.

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Aubrey Spriggs *is an intern with FRCA. She is a graduate student in the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration and an Eleanor Nims Brink Fellow in the school's Family Support Specialization.*

A Statewide Network for Parent Voices

By Lina Cramer

A new network of parents, practitioners, policymakers, and advocates is working to ensure that parents in Illinois have a voice in the policy decisions that affect them and their children.

The Illinois Family Partnership Network brings together parents and representatives from diverse organizations, state agencies, and advocacy groups. The Network's activities are based on the belief that parent involvement and family leadership are essential for improving the health and well-being of all children in the state.

History

The Illinois Family Partnership Network grew from the Parent Leadership Committee, which was formed in 1996 to involve parents in shaping local and state programs and policies that affect families and children. The committee included parents as well as professional representatives of organizations and agencies.

In March 1997, over 180 parent leaders attended the first Illinois Parent Leadership Conference. For a day and a half, the parents—who represented a wide range of interests and populations—took part in activities that strengthened their leadership skills and their knowledge of issues affecting Illinois children and families.

The success of the conference created the momentum for a statewide network for promoting parent leadership—the Illinois Family Partnership Network. The Network's central tenets are:

- Parents are first and foremost concerned about children's well-being.
- Parents share a great deal in common and will support each other on issues that affect children.
- Parents are the best recruiters of other parents.
- Parent and family leaders' interests and involvement change as their families grow and change.
- Communities need active parents in many organizations and arenas.

Current Activities

Today, the Network supports parent involvement and leadership in Illinois by connecting parents to training and skill-building opportunities, and by linking parents together regionally for sharing and mutual support as well as to the decision-making groups and boards that influence state and local policy.

Currently, IFPN is working with NPIN (National Parent Information Network) on developing a database of resources, training, and opportunities that Illinois parents can take advantage of and the issues that they face. In addition, a new web site is being used to spread the word about the Network, at npinil.crc.uiuc.edu/ifpn.html.

To learn more about the Illinois Family Partnership Network, contact:

Cynthia Vessel or Pam Huffman, Co-Coordinators, Illinois Family Partnership Network, c/o Voice for Illinois Children, 208 South LaSalle Street, 14th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604, 312/516-5559

Lina Cramer provides FRCA technical assistance and training in a variety of family support settings. She is active in the Illinois Family Partnership Network.

The Illinois Family Partnership Network is working to achieve the following vision in Illinois:

1. Families realize and use their own power.
2. Families' voices are heard in policy, program design, and oversight.
3. Services are more responsive and effective as a result of parent/family input.
4. Families find opportunities in their own communities to take leadership.
5. Every parent who needs help knows how to find it and feels comfortable asking for it.

This listing shows a few of the many resources available to support parent leadership and family involvement. To add your organization, on-line resource, or publications to the FRCA database, fax information to FRCA Help Desk, 312/338-1522.

National Organizations and Web Sites

Beach Center on Families and Disability
University of Kansas
3111 Haworth Hall
Lawrence, KS 66045
785/864-7600 (V/TTY)
Fax: 785/864-5825
beach@dole.lsi.ukans.edu
www.lsi.ukans.edu/beach/beachhp.htm

Works to provide families with the resources and skills needed to help their children with disabilities to reach their full potential. Conducts research on empowering adolescents and parents of children with disabilities, efficacy of parent-to-parent support, family support policy, friendships, family-centered care, child abuse and neglect, and the role of fathers.

Family Support Network
21902 Second Avenue West
Bothell, WA 98021
800/529-2294 or 425/487-4009
wecare@familynetwork.org
www.familynetwork.org

A network of responsible citizens who are willing to exchange services and support, both locally and nationwide. Families serve in a variety of ways, such as providing meals to shut-ins and respite to those in need. Community members complete a two part, 16-hour certification training where they learn leadership, community building, team building, resource pooling and peer support skills. They also learn what is happening at the local and state level in the areas of family preservation and family support.

Family Voices
P.O. Box 769
Algodones, NM 87001
505/867-2368
Fax: 505/867-6517
kidshealth@familyvoices.org
www.familyvoices.org

National grassroots organization of families and friends speaking on behalf of children with special health care needs. Founded by parents who developed national and state family networks and organizations to improve the health and education systems that serve their children. Goal is to help shape national, state, and local health care policy and practice in private and public health care systems by:

- Supporting a national network of volunteer regional and state coordinators who provide information to families and policymakers
- Serving as a clearinghouse to keep its members informed about health care issues
- Forming partnerships with professionals and other state and national organizations to make sure the voices of families are heard. Is a partner with FRCA in disseminating guidelines for health supervision of children and adolescents.

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
1021 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703/684-7710
Fax: 703/836-1040
ffcmh@crosslink.net
www.ffcmh.org

National parent-run organization focused on the needs of children and youth with emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders and their families. Serves as a catalyst for change by promoting partnerships among family members, professionals, and other interested citizens to improve services for children with emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders. Also provides leadership training of parents in advocacy and community outreach.

The Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Family Resource Institute
P.O. Box 2525
Lynnwood, WA 98036
800/999-3429 (in WA)
253/531-2878 (outside WA)
253/531-2668 (fax)
vicfas@hotmail.com

National organization that works with parents and professionals to help them identify, understand, and care for individuals with fetal alcohol syndrome and prenatal alcohol related disabilities.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
511 E. John Carpenter Freeway
No. 700
Irving, TX 75062
Fax: 214/744-6233
972/869-2206
www.madd.org

Parent-led organization that trains parents to get involved in schools and talk

to the media to advocate against drunk driving. MADD parents serve on public, law enforcement, and legislative advisory boards and aid in establishing local and county initiatives and task forces. Parents provide victim assistance and conduct outreach. Workshops and publications available.

National Association of Child Advocates (NACA)

1522 K Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
202/289-0777
Fax: 202/289-0776
naca@childadvocacy.org
www.childadvocacy.org

Advocacy organization dedicated to securing the safety, health, and education of children by building and strengthening state and community-based child advocacy organizations. Engages in advocacy work with policymakers and the media.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

1509 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-1426
800/424-2460 or 202/232-8777
Fax: 202/328-1846
naeyc@naeyc.org
http://www.naeyc.org

Largest membership organization of early childhood professionals. Works to increase public understanding and support for high-quality programs for young children and their families through public policy and public education initiatives. Collaborates with media representatives and government representatives at all levels to advocate for services for children and families.

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

c/o National Community Education Association
3929 Old Lee Highway
Suite 91A
Fairfax, VA 22030
703/359-8973
Fax: 703/359-0972
ferguson@ncea.com
www.ncpie.org

Advocates for the involvement of parents in their children's education and fosters relationships among home, school, and community that enhance young people's education. Is a collaboration of education, community, and public service organizations nationwide. Provides information on publications, training, and services available.

National Network of Partnership Schools

Johns Hopkins University
Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
3003 North Charles Street, Suite 200
Baltimore, MD 21218
410/516-8818
Fax: 410/516-8890
nnps@csos.jhu.edu
scov.csos.jhu.edu/p2000

An essential component of school organization that influences student development and learning by helping schools develop and maintain programs of partnerships with parents.

Parents Anonymous

675 West Foothill Blvd, Suite 220
Claremont, CA 91711-3475
909/621-6184
Fax: 909/625-6304
parentsanon@msn.com
www.parentsanonymous-natl.org

National organization that provides technical assistance and training on a variety of leadership skills for parents. Trains parents to train other parents to operate mutual support groups. Based on a vision that establishing parent input, leadership, and mutual support are essential components in strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect.

Parents as Teachers

10176 Corporate Square Drive
Suite 230
St. Louis, MO 63132
314/432-4330
Fax: 314/432-8963
patnc@patnc.org
www.patnc.org

PAT trains parents to be parent educators in its nationally replicated program to provide parents with the information and support they need to give their children the best possible start in life. Parents become certified to conduct home visits, coordinate group meetings, conduct developmental screenings, and link parents with providers of service and support. Parent educators work in partnership with the school and the community. Offers a variety of training and technical assistance.

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-8173
202/401-2000
Fax: 202/205-9133
Partner@ed.gov
pfie.ed.gov/

Seeks to encourage the development of family-school-community partnerships to promote children's learning and improve education. Committed to improving local schools and increasing family involvement in education.

Additional On-Line Resources

www.pta.org
Web site of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers provides information for parents, teachers, students, principals, administrators, and others interested in uniting the forces of home, school, and community on behalf of children and youth.

www2.acf.dhhs.gov /programs/hsb
Web site maintained by the Head Start Bureau as an electronic resource for Head Start service providers, parents, volunteers, community organizations, and others, who share an interest in helping children look forward to a brighter future.

http://www.npnd.org/ptis.htm
Provides a list of parent training and information centers in the United States. The majority of the centers serve the entire state, others are community-based and serve more local areas.

Publications

Empowerment and Family Support

Moncrieff Cochran, editor
1995, 167 pp.

From leading researchers in the parent empowerment movement comes this compilation of two years' worth of a networking bulletin published by members of the Cornell Empowerment Group. Articles offer research findings and program models to show how family support can empower families, especially low-income families, to meet the challenges that face them. Special topics include childcare and the empowerment process, redefining the professional role, and a global view of empowerment and family support.

Published by:
Cornell Empowerment Group

Available from:
Family Resource Coalition of America
312/338-0900

Essential Allies: Families as Advisors

By Elizabeth S. Jeppson and Josie Thomas
1995, 76 pp.

A guide for family resource centers to involve parents in a variety of ways. Discusses the benefits of and barriers to parent-provider collaboration, and provides tips for developing partnerships with parents.

Published by:
Institute for Family-Centered Care

Available from:
Family Resource Coalition of America
312/338-0900

Findings from an Evaluation of the Parent Institute for Quality Education Parent Involvement Program

By Gail L. Zellman, Brian Stecher, Stephen Klein, Daniel McCaffrey with Silvia Gutierrez, Roger Madison, Denise D. Quigley, Lisa Suarez
1998, 19 pp.

Programs designed to improve children's educational outcomes by teaching parents to become more involved in their child's schooling are widely offered by school districts. However, these programs are rarely evaluated, so it is difficult for conclusions to be drawn about their effectiveness in meeting their goals. The evaluation in this document was based on data from two large school districts—outcome data from over 2,000 students in one district and interview data from the second—to evaluate a local parent involvement program. This report will be of interest to providers of parent involvement programs, school district personnel, and others concerned about helping children to learn and the ways that parents can help to make that happen.

Published by:
RAND Education, 310/451-7002

Learning from Colleagues: Family/Professional Partnerships Moving Forward Together

By the Peer Technical Assistance Network Writing team: Jane Adams, Charlie Bliss, Valerie Burrell Mohammad, Judith Meyers, and Elaine Slaton
1998, 51pp

This document presents research and commentary on the issues involved in utilizing a family/professional partnership systems approach in situations involving children who have developed or are at risk of developing serious emotional, behavioral, or mental health disturbances and their families.

Published by:
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, 703/684-7710

Learning to Be Partners

Lynn E. Pooley, Flora Wonatschek, and Jeanne Williams, eds. (FRCA, Center for Assessment and Policy Development, and University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development)
1997, 250 pp.

continued on page 40

This ready-to-use training program contains a week's worth of activities, handouts, discussion ideas, and mini-lectures to help staff begin to develop the skills and knowledge they need to act as true partners with families. Written by a team of seasoned practitioners, trainers, and researchers, the curriculum uses group experience rather than "classroom" learning, active participation, hands-on practice, and peer interaction and sharing. With this detailed road map, the trainer can guide staff who are new to family support through a validating and supportive training experience.

Published by:
Family Resource Coalition of America
312/338-0900

Making Room at the Table

By Elizabeth Jeppson, Josie Thomas, Anthony Markward, Joanne Kelly, Gail Koser, and David Diehl
1997, 72 pp.

With this program of guided activities, families, program planners, staff, policymakers, and other key players develop the awareness and skills they will need to work as a team in planning services and carrying out programs.

Published by:
Family Resource Coalition of America
312/338-0900

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs

By the National PTA
1998, 42 pp.

Developed by the PTA in cooperation with education and parent involvement professionals, these standards—communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision making and advocacy, and collaborating with community—were created to be used in conjunction with other national standards and reform initiatives in support of children's learning and success.

Published by:
National PTA, 312/670-6782

Partnerships for Change

1997, 2 videos plus 50-page guide

This video-supported training program stresses partnership, shared decision-making, local governance, and collaboration. Staff members and parents undergo training together and gain skills in identifying strengths, communicating needs, and reaching out to others in the community. Available in Spanish and English.

Published by:
Family Communications, Inc., and University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development

Available from:
Family Resource Coalition of America
312/338-0900

A Parent Leader Turns a Hands-Off School Into a

Hands-On Heaven

When Stephennie Segrest Stuckey's daughter was in Head Start, there were plenty of ways to stay involved in her education. Stuckey was a Head Start Policy Council member. But when her daughter entered kindergarten, Stuckey had to look for new ways to get involved.

In 1997, she began going to meetings of the Illinois Family Partnership Network, where she met the President and Vice President of the Illinois PTA and told them there was no active PTA at her daughter's school, and that the principal wouldn't let parents meet in the school. They told her about her rights as a parent, including the right to have a PTA, and gave her advice on how to start one.

"At first I was struggling and I felt lost, but now the PTA is very successful. We work with the school district, and the mayor is very supportive."

Stuckey found out that the principal not only had been blocking parents from getting involved in the school, he had in reserve $14,000 that parents had raised in earlier years for the PTA and the school. She got parents coming to PTA meetings at the school, organized a fall welcome for children and parents, distributed school supplies to needy families, and was elected president of her local PTA. She now sits on the school board of her district.

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A Multi-Cultural Haven for Families

West Side Family Center, St. Paul, Minnesota

Families take part in play time. The center has activities for parents and children together, where many different languages are spoken.

Most people don't think of Minnesota as an example of ethnic diversity. But communities in many parts of the state are very diverse, and include a growing number of Hmong, Latino, and African American as well as Caucasian and other families. Family resource centers such as the West Side Family Center in St. Paul offer a rich palate of services and support. In addition to giving families ways to meet and get to know each other, the center helps immigrant families preserve their cultures while getting support adjusting to their home.

The center offers parent support groups in English, Spanish, and Hmong, and has multilingual, multi-cultural family play time, where parents and children take part in activities together. There's a Hmong dance class, and holiday celebrations include Latin American and Hmong holidays. Staff and volunteers provide translation and interpreting services for families who need help filling out government forms and school paper work, and a pool of mentors is being developed to train parents and staff in translating.

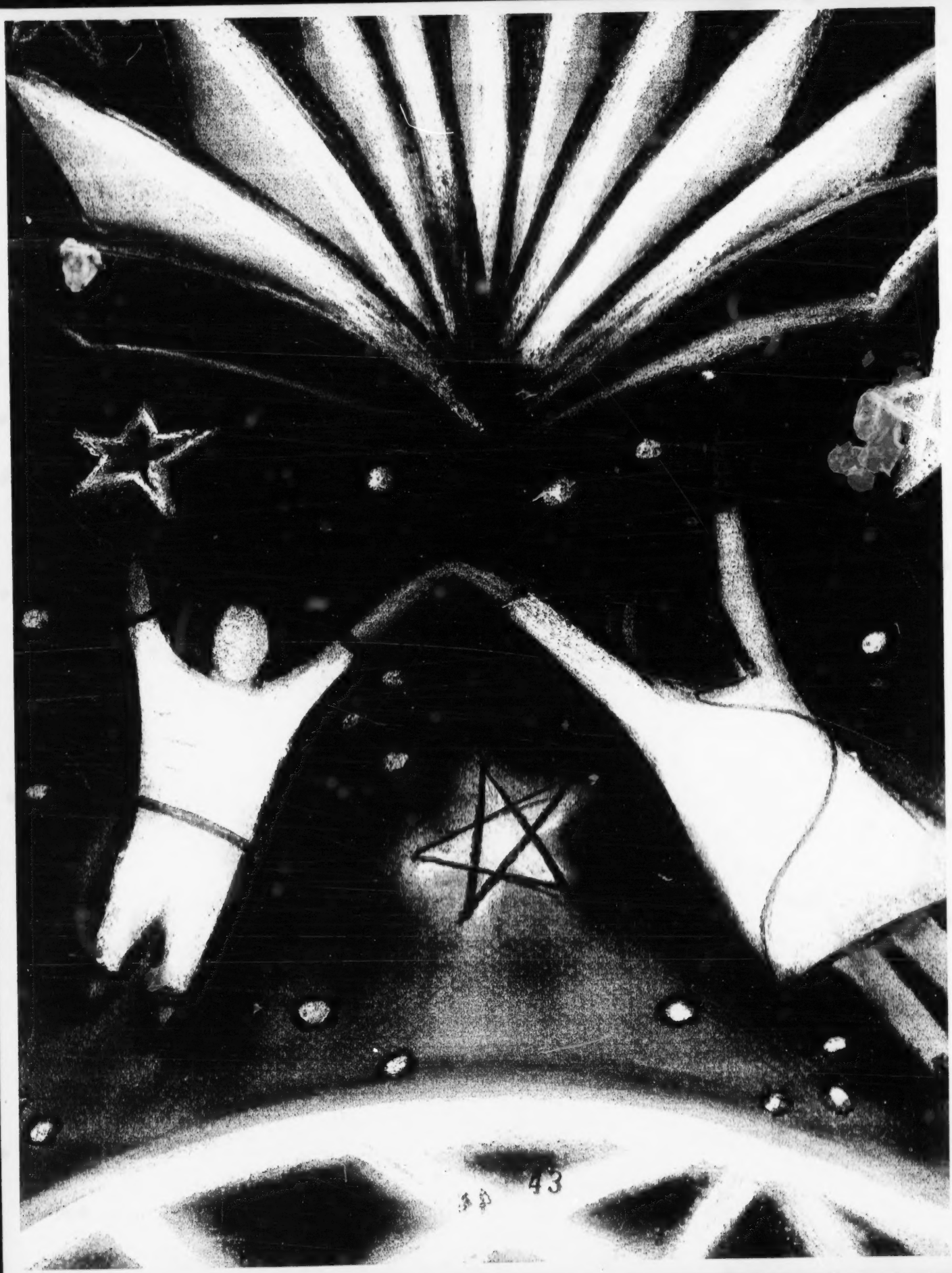
Art programs and games help children develop motor skills and be creative while parents take classes and participate in support groups.

Other activities include children's dance and Tae Kwon Do classes; parents' classes in infant care, cooking, reading, computers, and crafts; and a "chat room" where parents share experiences and support.

Families in the area—many of them so busy with work, school, and other activities that they didn't have time for dinner together—invented "Monday Night LIVE!" On designated Mondays, families meet for dinner, socializing, and educational programs. The evening is sponsored by a number of community partners.

For parents who need short-term childcare, a clearinghouse finds open slots in existing daycare homes and centers. And a pool of childcare providers gives on-site care during events. Transportation also is offered.

The staff includes five paid staff, two full-time volunteers, 10 occasional employee childcare providers and van drivers, and 50 part-time volunteers who average two to eight hours a week. The center receives government and foundation funding as well as individual contributions.



LIBRARIES FOR FAMILIES

When we think of family support settings, what comes to mind?

Family resource centers, of course—and also schools, hospitals, day care centers ... the list is growing. But one institution often is overlooked: libraries. With a lot to offer each other, and a shared goal of strengthening families through resources, libraries and family resource centers are forming partnerships in a growing number of communities.

by Sandra Feinberg and Gail Koser

Partners With Different Strengths

Many still think of libraries as archives, quiet spots, or intellectual outposts primarily used by the middle class. But public libraries provide a safe, neutral, central place for all family members to access a large range of resources without being judged or turned away. They serve children, youth, and adults; are a visible and recognized community resource; are open a variety of hours; and have trained professionals ready to help people find the materials and resources they need.

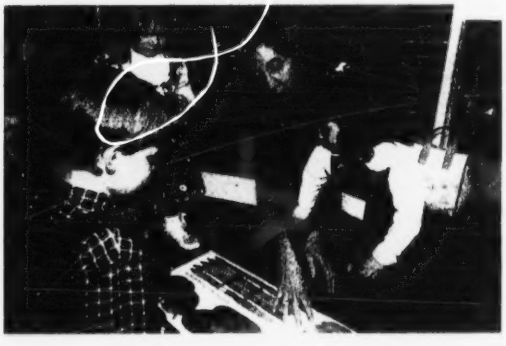
Family resource centers offer complementary support. They provide a whole range of services and supports for families in the community. Their materials focus on family well-being. And their expertise—that of both staff and parents—complements what libraries offer, providing knowledge in child development, parenting skills, and other areas as determined by the community. Families are key decision makers and have critical input into centers, which are driven by their needs. Centers may reach a different and more diverse population, and they may offer complementary locations and hours of operation.

Connecting public libraries with family resource centers opens new possibilities and helps both entities do their jobs. These partnerships aren't just a matter of opening a family resource center in public library space. There is a whole range of opportunities for collaboration, from strategic partnerships that feature shared resources and ongoing communication to library-based family centers that offer comprehensive services.

Not the Typical Library

Integrating family support stretches the boundaries of the typical library. Libraries' services for young children tend to be limited to story times and reading clubs. The focus is generally on children only and does not extend to the family. Staff often work in isolation from other family service providers within their communities, which limits their reach and effectiveness.

Literacy begins at home. To reach young children and serve families, librarians need to focus on engaging parents and caregivers as first teachers and primary nurturers. By serving as facilitators, models, mentors, and coaches for parents, they can have a greater impact on the young child as a future reader and library user. By redesigning the library environment to welcome families, librarians expand their constituency and make the library a more vital influence in the lives of children. All aspects of the library should be grounded in the strengths-based, community-focused principles of family support practice (a list of principles is available from the FRCA web site, www.frca.org, or by calling 312/338-0900).



Family Place libraries turn public libraries into places where parents can help their children learn and grow. Here, a mother plays with her daughter during scheduled parent-child activities, to help develop early reading and cognitive skills.

Getting Started

There are some key steps to developing a useful collaboration between libraries and family resource centers:

1. Assess the Community

Collect basic information on the library, the family resource center, and other resources, using the following questions as a guide. If the community has undertaken a needs and resources assessment recently, these answers should be available.[1]

About the library:

- Where is the public library?
- Is there a children's librarian or special children's staff?
- Does the library offer programs for children and/or for parents?
- Is meeting space available?
- What types of services or other resources are provided for families?

About family resource centers:

- Is there a local family resource center? (The state department of education or social services, or the county health department, can tell you.)
- Where is the center?
- What kinds of resources and services does it offer?
- Is it publicly or privately supported?
- Does it charge for services?
- How is it staffed?

In general:

- What other services exist for families?
- What other institutions offer resources for families and children?
- Is there a local coalition that focuses on family support?

2. Initiate Contact

Call and visit the library or family resource center. If they are interested in discussing a partnership, arrange a way for center staff and librarians to meet to and discuss their respective resources and services. Then convene a small planning group. Building a good relationship starts with respecting each other's expertise and being clear about what you have to offer.

3. Recognize Boundaries

Each institution brings strengths and limitations to the table. Either party may be concerned about limited staff and volunteers, pressing schedules, and different hours. Service restrictions of both facilities need to be explored, as does the use of terms and definitions that are germane to each system. These issues may initially inhibit partnerships.

4. Build the Relationship

Take time to get to know each other. There may be some reluctance to approaching each other as resources. Talk about local networking opportunities. Target other potential partners who can be brought into the process. Discuss the community role of each entity, and its mission. Explore turf issues. Sensitizing one another will clear the way for positive collaboration.

5. Make a Plan

Identify resources that are relatively easy to share, and decide which activities could be readily undertaken. Plan when these activities will be done and who is responsible. Set up a meeting schedule for future planning and to review progress, successes, and concerns. Decide on other cooperative ventures that you may want to pursue in the future. Plans should be explicit, detailing clear working arrangements, responsibilities, and timelines.

Family Place Libraries: A Blueprint

Family Place is a national initiative that gives libraries and family resource centers a blueprint for collaboration, training, technical assistance, and a national

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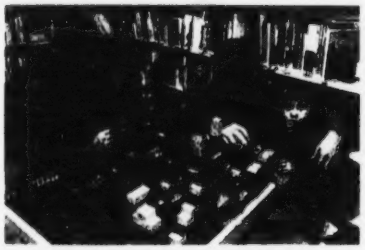


Photo © John Griffin 1998 All rights reserved

Fathers at the Middle Country Public Library in Centereach, N.Y., have fun with their sons during activities to stimulate motor skills. The location is a model site for Family Place libraries. Surrounded by books, children in Family Place libraries learn early to enjoy reading.

network of support. Through its model, local public libraries become community hubs for family services. A national panel of experts in children's library services, early childhood and parent education, family support, early intervention, health and human services, literacy, and related fields guides the development of the Family Place.

Enter a Family Place library and you'll find developmentally appropriate programs for parents and young children; a special space for young children and their caregivers; collections for babies, toddlers, parents, and family service professionals; and access to electronic resources on emergent literacy, reading readiness, and parent education.

If you arrive during a Parent/Child Workshop, you'll think you're at a family resource center. The five-week series of sessions forms the core of Family Place libraries. It is conducted at the library, in a meeting space converted into an interactive early childhood learning center. It involves both toddlers and their parents, features local experts who specialize in young children, emphasizes the role of parents as first teachers, facilitates early interven-

continued on page 46

Why Partner?

Building a relationship between the local public library and the family resource center can help both parties:

Get more mileage out of staff expertise. Partnerships expand the reach of family support staff's skills by making them available to libraries and the families who use them. And librarians' expertise is invaluable in acquiring, organizing, and increasing access to family support materials. Staff make valuable additions to the committee and boards of the other organization.

Create better environments for families and children. Co-sponsoring events results in more activities that help families develop in safety. These can be especially helpful in communities lacking constructive after-school and evening activities.

Expand services while saving money. Streamlining and coordinating expands programs and services at little or no extra cost. For example, reading clubs and family literacy programs can be co-sponsored. Story-reading times can be held at the center. Books and other resources at one location can be cataloged at the other, or can be co-located. Librarians can provide bibliographies on special topics of interest to families.

Increase resources. Libraries and family resource centers can develop and submit joint grant proposals to increase funding for new services for both the library and the center, and can hold joint fund-raisers.

Broaden outreach. Libraries and family resource centers may serve different families. By posting notices of each other's activities, sharing space on newsletters or handouts, and sharing the skills of multilingual staff, each institution can reach a more diverse audience.

Cross-train staff. Each staff brings to the partnership skills that they can share not only with families, but with each other. Librarians can be sensitized to the needs of families, learn about the role of providers in parent education and support, and explore their own relationship with parents. Program staff can improve their ability to find and help families access resources for adults, youth, and children.

Helpful Resources

for Libraries and Family Resource Centers

- **Dengel, D. J. (1998) "Partnering: Building community relationships."** ***Journal of Youth Services*** **Winter. 153-160.**
- **Feinberg, S., J. Kuchner, and S. Feldman (1998)** ***Learning environments for young children: Rethinking library spaces and services.*** **Chicago: ALA Editions.**
- **Feinberg, S., and K. Deerr (1995)** ***Running a parent/child workshop: A how-to-do-it manual for librarians.*** **New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers.**
- **Feinberg, S., and S. Feldman (1996)** ***Serving families and children through partnerships: A how-to-do-it manual for librarians.*** **New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers.**
- **Feinberg, S. and C. Rogoff (1998) "Diversity takes children to a friendly family place."** ***American Libraries*** **August. 50-52.**

Feinberg and Koser, continued from page 45

tion, and teaches strategies for healthy child development.

A Family Place library is a center for information on early childhood, parent education, emergent literacy, socialization, and family support. Going beyond both traditional libraries and traditional child services, it promotes good health, early learning, parent involvement, and supportive communities, because these play a critical role in young children's growth and development.

Family Place staff not only conduct programs and develop collections, but are actively involved in building coalitions with family service professionals, reaching out to families and young children (in particular, those most at risk), and assessing the services of the library and the needs of the community and its families.

Staff also join a national network of those engaged in partnerships like theirs, and use an e-mail listserv to share experiences, resources, and research.

Family Place libraries collaborate on new, innovative programs. Collaborations among diverse programs (such as those in urban, suburban, and rural settings) are expanding the reach of services, producing innovative evaluation strategies, and attracting funders.

Training and technical assistance is provided by staff of Libraries for the Future and Middle Country Public Library. Family Place library staff attend a three-day intensive training conducted by Middle Country Library and Libraries for the Future. The next training is October 5–7, 1999. One-day, on-site introductory workshops are also available.

The Family Place initiative is supported by the Hasbro Children's Foundation, the Pritzker Cousins Foundation, and the UPS Foundation, along with local and regional funders.

For more information or to get involved, contact Sandra Feinberg at Middle Country Public Library, 101 Eastwood Blvd., Centereach, NY 11720, 516/585-9393, extension 200, feinberg@mcpl.lib.ny.us; or contact Gail Koser at FRCA.

Removing Roadblocks to PARTNERSHIP

It is important to anticipate and address potential problems early. Some common issues are:

Staff Attitudes About Young Children

Is the library staff flexible? Are some willing to reach out to young children and families? Staff cannot be forced to change their attitudes, but must be given ways to help with which they are comfortable. Staff can educate themselves by reading, and should receive the training and support they need from administrators. Resources and training are available from the Family Place Institute.

Staff Constraints

Limited availability of staff can prevent new and exciting ideas from being implemented. Who can help? Support staff? Parents? Friends groups or volunteers? Community resource providers? How can the participants in the family resource center be involved?

Administrators' Concerns

Library administrators who aren't used to family support may need to be convinced of its merits. Prepare a presentation for the administration that shows how libraries gain more support from parents by partnering with the family resource center, and that parents' votes result in decisions about the library. Parents volunteer and help the library, and partnerships can increase opportunities for funding.

Current Programs

Current programs at the library may not be open to families with young children and/or may not operate according to the principles of family support practice. Assess and modify programs, so that they encourage young children and families to use the library and set a stage for active and healthy learning. Consider conducting the Family Place Parent/Child Workshop instead of current programs for toddlers. Through it, library staff begin to reach out to family support staff, understand their role with parents, and appropriately serve very young children.

Outreach

The Family Place and its core program, the Parent/Child Workshop, focus on individual needs. They can be viewed as a literacy program or an enrichment program depending on where the family is and what they need. Reaching all types of families depends on the librarian's ability to reach out to family service providers. Asking for help is key.

NOTE

[1] A useful resource is *Know Your Community: A Step-by-Step Guide to Community Needs and Resources Assessment*, by Bryan Samuels, Niloufer Ahsan, and Jill Garcia (1995) Chicago, Ill.: Family Resource Coalition of America.

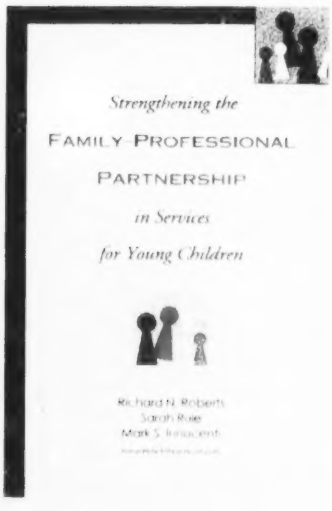
Gail Koser *is Senior Program Advisor and Senior Advisor for Family Support America / The STATES Initiative at FRCA.*

Sandra Feinberg *is Director of the Middle Country Public Library. She introduced the national Parent Child Workshop, which welcomes young children into libraries, and is the author of several books on family support in libraries. She is a member of FRCA.*

A BLUEPRINT
FOR PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

BY **JOANNE KELLY**

Strengthening the Family-Professional Partnership in Services for Young Children, by Richard N. Roberts, Sarah Rule, and Mark S. Innocenti, makes a strong case for partnerships between families and professionals in the family services, and defines what is needed for these partnerships to flourish. Built around five principles, it is useful for program staff at all levels, those involved in public agencies that serve families, students planning to enter the field, and those designing service systems, such as policymakers, community leaders, and funders.



As guiding principles for family-staff partnerships, the authors offer: community-based services, cultural competence, family-centered care, service coordination, and a seamless system of care. While these do not match the nine principles of family support practice word-for-word, the correspondence of content is striking (see sidebar, page 48).

The authors devote a chapter to each of their five principles, then move on to recommend an active role for higher education institutions and agencies in preparing staff to operate within the partnership mode—through pre-service education and in-service training and supervision, respectively. Another chapter suggests ways to conduct program evaluation using the participatory partnership framework. The book ends with a series of helpful case examples.

A SOLUTION TO THE HUMAN SERVICES CRISIS

The type of service system that *Strengthening the Family-Professional Partnership* recommends is one in which families are welcomed into the process of change as equal partners. The authors' central thesis is: Service providers must create with family members a partnership that recognizes, honors, and respects differences among families. In doing so, the services provided through such partnerships will lead to optimal outcomes for families.

Such partnerships, they write, are not only a standard for human services, but are the most practical solution to today's crisis in human services: "Partnerships with families can facilitate changes within the system at all levels to provide more integrated systems of service," they write. Systems that operate under a partnership framework provide families with a heightened sense of well-being and enhanced ability to interact with the service system. Well-being is defined as a family's ability to adjust to new situations and to incorporate the needs and contributions of all their members into the allocation of resources and the decision-making process.

WHAT DO PARTNERSHIPS LOOK LIKE?

In order to implement parent-staff partnerships and achieve the resulting family well-being, say the authors, change must occur on all levels:

- The family level—where a service plan is developed with the family
- The community level—where agencies and the family work together to develop partnerships that make services more accessible and responsive
- The state level—where local partnership efforts are supported, assisted, and coordinated
- The federal level—where federal agencies coordinate their efforts to create and fund non-competing, effective programs that facilitate all of the above

When this model is realized, the government systems involved in family services strive to be both efficient and effective. Without parents as partners, systems run the risk of improving their efficiency, but not their effectiveness. Family-professional partnerships, the authors say, provide the impetus and conscience of the service integration movement. In order for systems reform to hit its mark and produce better outcomes for families, input from consumers and partnerships with families must be established.

How To Get There

After describing their model system of service and the five principles that underlie it, the authors give strategies for achieving the model through preservice and in-service training and activities—which, of course, involve family members every step of the way. The shift to partnerships calls for re-education of all staff, from the front lines to administrators and policymakers. The book gives a starting point for this re-education, recommending that those involved set a common vision for what the system needs to look like and then make that system possible by putting in place organizational supports that match the vision.

Principles of Successful Staff-Family Partnerships	Principles of Family Support Practice
Community-based services	Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process (Principle 5).
Cultural competence	Programs affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their avility to function in a multicultural society (Principle 4)
Family-centered care	Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members–adults, youth, and children (Principle 2)
Service coordination	Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, resopnsive, and accountable to the families served (Principle 7)
Seamless system of care	(See above)

The authors devote a final chapter to evaluating family services in such a way that family members are full and equal partners. As systems move toward family-centered services and seamlessly integrated systems, services are more difficult to evaluate in the traditional sense. The authors seek not to lessen the rigor of evaluations, but to increase the relevance of their findings. They say the validity of evaluations is increased when the questions being asked and the methods of asking them are not based on a just few stakeholders' viewpoints and/or biases.

Strengthening the Family-Professional Partnership is valuable to those who are interested in both defining what it means to partner with family members and finding concrete ways to implement such service reform. The book is a welcome addition to the small but growing pool of resources on strengths-based family-staff partnerships, which includes FRCA's introductory training program, *Learning To Be Partners*, and its trainers' curriculum, *Making Room at the Table*; as well as the video-based workshop *Partnerships for Change* (University of Pittsburgh and Family Communications) and the seminal text *Essential Allies* (Institute for Family-Centered care). All of these are available from FRCA.

International Perspectives On Family Support
Walter Hellinckx, M. J. Colton, and Margaret Williams, editors
1998, 240 pages, hardcover, $59.95
Ashgate Publishing Company, Old Post Road, Brookfield, VT 05036, 802/276-3162
(Get a 15% discount by ordering at www.ashgate.com)

Family preservation and family support services are in place in many countries. Programs and approaches described by the diverse authors represented in this collection run the gamut from intensive preservation efforts to prevention-based family support work around the world. Contributing authors first discuss theoretical aspects of child rearing, drawing on their international and diverse experiences with serving and strengthening families. The book then turns to practice, with some authors presenting models of programs internationally. Specific recommendations are provided for improving policy and practice. The third and final part of the book presents articles on the evaluation of family preservation work, drawing from efforts in many different countries.

Joanne Kelly *is Senior Policy Analyst for the Family Resource Coalition of America.*

Families Say It Best

by Shamara Riley

To have a future, family support efforts have to communicate the promise and spirit of their work to families, funders, policymakers, and the general public—which can be difficult in the face of media coverage that focuses on the negative.

The most powerful tool for spreading the word may not be an expensive public relations consultant or a slick television campaign—but rather, families themselves. Families are both the force behind family support and its most significant beneficiaries. When they tell their stories—about overcoming challenges, about the support they receive and give, about the conditions of their communities, about building the strengths they need to raise their children—it's hard not to listen.

Through the increased visibility that media coverage and public speaking engagements attract, family support programs can garner more family-friendly legislation as well as funding for expanded services.

Below are some tips for helping families prepare to fill the important roles of spokesperson and ambassador for family support:

Do your homework.
Conduct background research on reporters who plan to interview families. What sort of stories have they done in the past? If they approached you, find out why they want to interview the families. If an organization or policymaker requests a parent speaker, ask about the event's purpose and the format for asking and answering questions. Set time parameters for all interviews and speaking engagements.

Select charismatic individuals.
Which adjectives do you want people to associate with family support, and with your program? Friendliness and warmth? Cultural diversity? Think about which program participants represent that image. Select individuals who have been involved with the program a long time, who have an emotionally gripping story to tell, and who are articulate and at ease while telling their stories.

Set up a speakers' bureau.
Keep an updated list of individuals who are willing and available to tell their stories, along with their topics of expertise. Are there particular topics (e.g., welfare reform or childcare challenges) that are requested often? If so, recruit individuals who can speak on them. Equally distribute requests among your speakers' bureau list, and don't give out speakers' contact information without prior consent.

Be up front.
Outline the pros and cons of speaking engagements with families. Benefits can include developing leadership and speaking skills that they can use elsewhere, inspiring other families to participate in family support services, and helping to change public policy for children and families. However, families should be forewarned that they may be treated differently after they speak out, and may even be ostracized by those who still don't understand.

The most powerful tool for spreading the word isn't an expensive public relations consultant or a slick television campaign—but rather, families themselves.

Prepare speakers in advance.

Role-plays may help family members become comfortable telling their stories. Brainstorm the sort of questions that may be asked. Likely questions include: What challenges led the family to seek assistance? How have they benefited from the program? How is the family doing now? What advice do they have for other families in their situation? What public policies would help families like them? Develop no more than three key points about your program, and help the participant get ready to convey them. For media interviews, families should also be aware that until the reporter leaves, anything they say and do could be used for the story.

Help families establish boundaries.

Families should understand that they are not required to answer questions that they find intrusive, and that they can end uncomfortable interviews. You may want to draft a list of issues which the family is willing to discuss, and give it to interviewers or event hosts beforehand. Offer to be present during interviews and speaking engagements. And make clear to families that they can choose to remain anonymous during media interviews.

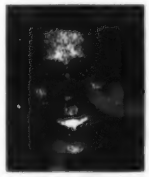
Get permission for minors to be interviewed.

Make sure that the parents or guardians of those under age 18 have granted consent for them to speak publicly or be interviewed.

Keep track of events.

Keep a log of speeches and media coverage. This helps gauge how the program is being represented in the public, and shows the effectiveness of media outreach. Was there an increase in the number of families coming to the center after Ms. Davidson spoke at the annual church picnic? Jot it down, and remember to keep church activities in mind when planning promotion. ■

Shamara Riley is Director of Public Relations for FRCA. For assistance with your efforts to raise awareness of family support, contact her at 312/338-0900 x 129, shamara.riley@frca.org.



Resources

Below are some resources that can help you effectively utilize program participants as spokespersons. All of these are available from FRCA. Call 312/338-0900 for more information.

Making the Case for Family Support (provides a concise explanation of why family support is what America needs, along with facts and figures).

Partnerships for Change: Building Skills for Family Support (video-based workshops, available in both English and Spanish, that take staff and program participants through practicing the skills needed to form partnerships, focus on strengths, speak up, and reach out).

Raise Your Legislator's Antenna: A Nuts-and-Bolts Guide to How (and Why) to Advocate for Families—With Families (focuses on step-by-step legislative advocacy for families, with families).

The assumptions of prevention, cultural responsiveness, and comprehensiveness ... underlie all efforts at community building, and family resource and support personnel have become key players in that process.

—Bernice Weissbourd, Founder, Family Resource Coalition of America

news for networks

The Networker, a new quarterly newsletter for family support networks, helps you make your network more effective. Articles cover:

- Conferences, meetings, and public education events that you can model
- Updates on trends in the field
- The pros and cons of 501 c)
- Charging membership dues
- Receiving funding from government sources
- Videos, training manuals, and evaluation tools that others are using
- Much more!

Learn from other network directors about what works for them in providing training, connecting with legislators, using technology to connect members, and other topics. To receive a free copy or a free subscription, or to share an idea for an article, contact editor Julia Delapp at 312/338-0900 x 130, julia.delapp@frca.org.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Soul of the Movement

and Why Funders Care About It

Photo © 1999 Stephen Shames, Matrix

BY RICHARD KINCH

What follows in this article are comments, not by an expert or even a practitioner, but by an intelligent and sympathetic observer. Without doubt, sympathetic.

As a volunteer and in my paid work, I have usually functioned from the perspective of funder—I was a staff member with a private foundation for many years and am still very busy as a United Way allocations volunteer.

But I have also served on boards and committees and the staffs of nonprofit organizations, that is, grant-seekers. As both funder and grant-seeker, I was able to encourage and facilitate (along with many others) the start-up of the first family resource centers in my community, Racine, Wisconsin. Like you, I have tried to explain to others what family support is. I have also had the frequent opportunity to hear others attempt to persuade me why it should be supported.

The Minds of Funders

To see into the minds of funders, it helps to understand that the only difference between them and you is that they have resources at their disposal. Like you, they wish they had more answers.

Like you, they are puzzled by and uncertain about the complicated social problems in which we are immersed. Like you, they have to report to someone, and when they do, they would like to list some successes.

We should also realize that funders, both public and private, are beginning to have doubts about typical American responses to social problems. The typical and instinctive American itch, when face to face with social dysfunction, has been to pass a law, add something to the school curriculum, and fund a new program—or at least design a new program.

Thus programs breed like gerbils and, like gerbils, one often looks rather like another (except to other gerbils, of course). And it is no secret that among funders, elected officials, policymakers, opinion makers, and philanthropists (what we call "decision makers"), there is declining confidence in this program-by-program approach. For the past 50 years, they have hired troops and sent them out to treat alcoholism, delinquency, domestic violence, school failure, and other problems—and from the front, they receive reports of modest victories only.

TO MAKE THE CASE FOR YOUR FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM, YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE THE CASE FOR THE FAMILY SUPPORT MOVEMENT. IT'S EASIER THAN IT SEEMS.

These programs were built over the base of the medical model, that is, a professional with superior skill and knowledge fixes or cures a client or patient of her dysfunction. The client or patient is seen as an object rather than a subject,

52

Kinch, continued from page 51

more or less defined by her malady rather than her assets.

We believe, of course, that there is an alternative to this old way of doing business program by program, problem by problem, and that is family support.

Our Mission: To Alter a Culture

Advocates of family support share some understandings: We know that family support is not a program, that it is a set of principles meant to guide, direct, and even transform services. We know that the widespread critique of categorical, deficit-based human service programs that are driven by professionals does not apply to family support.

What we are studying, promoting, disseminating, and worrying over is a set of principles, something much more difficult to describe than a medical-model intervention program with dysfunctional objects and billable hours. And yet when we are asked to define family support, we are expected to answer in terms of programs as generally understood for the last 50 years, as described above.

We wish to speak not of needs assessments and dysfunctions and target populations and clients. We have read John McKnight and we have heard Bernice Weissbourd. Our paradigms have shifted, even though others may not have noticed. It is not our mission to create yet another cluster of programs but to alter a culture.

Why the Movement Matters

Anyone wishing to persuade funders should abide the universal number-one advisory: know your funder. They do differ. Most public and private funders still operate under categorical guidelines, that is, their funds are to be used to address a particular category of problem, such as low reading scores, homelessness, or abandoned animals. Some, however, seek to fund efforts that are universal and asset-based, preventive and systemic.

Telling funders such as these that you want them to support another program may cause their eyes to narrow in caution. But maybe they can understand family support as a movement, as a major trend in human services over the past 25 years that seems prepared to stay the course.

Make clear that family support itself is not family resource centers, but that it is the practice of asset-based, preventive, universal services available to families, services that respect families in their various manifestations and regard them as subjects, not objects. Then tell them that this practice is made concrete in hundreds of local places by hundreds of local programs—such as yours. It rests on the conviction and commitment of many individuals. It is more or less made possible by some government laws and policies.

We must practice and promote family support at all levels, not just in our programs. If systems are hostile, policy careless, and behavior inconsistent, our programs are breathing in an alien medium; and our behavior, practice, and policy, though written by angels and funded by the national debt, will never alter the culture, our true goal.

Constraints

There are really no secrets for raising funds. Nor are there magic potions for locating allies, administering personnel, managing an agency, or getting the financial reports in on time. But understanding our constraints can help us make the case for support from decision makers in breaking these constraints and increasing the power of the family support movement. Our major constraints are:

- Many local family resource centers are underfunded. As the nation heaves within hailing distance of "full employment" during the second Clinton Administration, resource center staff compensation has difficulty competing with other employment. The result is greater staff turnover than ever.
- Quality control is hard to ensure. Where formal credentials do not exist, informal controls are therefore of the utmost importance. Some of us like to believe that they are indeed more effective. The national and other organizations that aspire to lead the movement must function as standard setters and assure by more effective means than paper credentials that practice is similar to the ideal.
- There is an insidious cult of compliance. Doing all by the book, meeting all the requirements of conventional management, following all the

WE MUST PRACTICE AND PROMOTE FAMILY SUPPORT AT ALL LEVELS, NOT JUST IN OUR PROGRAMS. IF SYSTEMS ARE HOSTILE, POLICY CARELESS, AND BEHAVIOR INCONSISTENT, OUR PROGRAMS ARE BREATHING IN AN ALIEN MEDIUM...

demands of funders and officials and auditors, while necessary, can never be sufficient. Mere compliance can even be stifling, squeezing the life out of creativity and innovation and the pursuit of mission. This is not an argument for mismanagement or carelessness, for while we attend to these details we must also be keepers of the dream. We must do both.

- The final barrier is more personal, that is, the difficulty in keeping the faith. While working very hard, we have to be patient. It's hard enough to see the big picture; it's even harder to take the long view. Even though we are restless Americans, we have to understand that we are not going to fix things in a few years. It took us 50 years or more to get into this fix. It might take the family support movement longer than that to get us out of it.

Cause for Celebration

Although our professional interests may require us to think, talk about, and manage one family support program, or programs in general that are known as family support efforts, our true dedication cannot be to a particular program or set of programs. Our dedication should be to family support at all levels and in all manifestations. We should feel good when behavior, policies, and services are asset-based and family-friendly, whatever they are called.

Whether or not it operates under the banner of family support, we should celebrate every asset-based, collaborative program that regards people as subjects rather than objects. Every FAST program, every local Nurturing Program (if true to its genius) is evidence that the family support movement is winning, for the family support paradigm and principles have made these programs possible.

We don't yet have a family resource center at every intersection, but when we are at our best we will not care what they are called, just so they are there. Our mission is to inculcate a set of principles, principles that respect and accept all kinds of families, that seek not to blame, that understand that even the weakest have many strengths. It is no small thing to view people as subjects rather than objects. All people. ■

Richard Kinch *is a private consultant living in Racine, Wisconsin. For several years he was a program officer with the Johnson Foundation, which operates the Wingspread Center. He is an active community volunteer, a founding member of the Oversight Committee for the two family resource centers in Racine, and a member of FRCA.*

Affirming program participants' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities is integral to the process of working with families as equal partners.

—Virginia L. Mason, Executive Director, FRCA

Rose Is Rose

PSST! PUT AWAY THIS CLEAN LAUNDRY, PLEASE...
AND BE CAREFUL NOT TO WAKE THE PAJAMAS!
1-16
HE'S HELPFUL IF I KNOW HOW TO ASK!
TIP TOE
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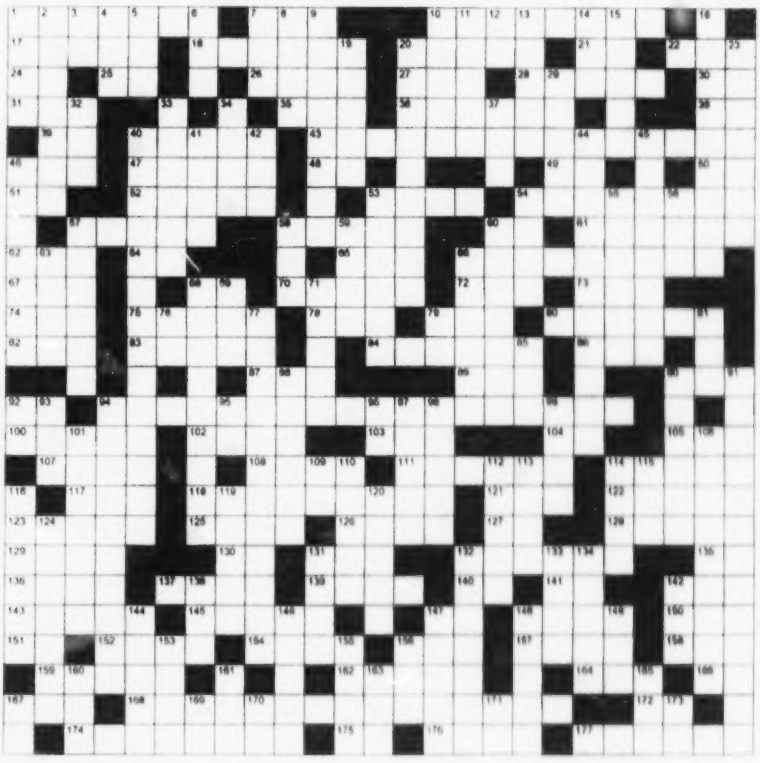
Early Childhood

by Kathy Goetz Wolf



Across

1 NY Yiddish-language newspaper
7 ___ of Steel
10 _____ and Child Health, federal funding stream
17 Anthropological term for not-self
18 Ancestral home to Nguzo Saba
20 Colorado family support activist Bea
21 Three-toed sloth of Scrabble fame
22 Presidents' Day mo.
24 Exclamation of pleasure
25 Yogic practice with mantra (abbr.)
26 Stepped
27 NYC racing parlors
28 Nursery ____
30 Portuguese hello
31 Gam
35 Batman and Robin: the dynamic ___
36 Yogi's sidekick
38 Common conjunction
39 Suffix for adverb
40 Young children and drunk drivers are asked to touch these
43 Pediatrician, Touchpoints author, & dia per spokesperson
46 European mountain
47 Egg producer
48 That is (abbr.)
49 Do over (pref.)
50 Note after la
51 ___ and behold
52 Blood vessels
53 Dreaded newborn killer (abbr.)
54 Russian alphabet
57 Recognizable variety of product
58 Once more
60 Modus Operandi (abbr.)
61 Where you are when surfing the web
62 Exam for wannabe lawyers
64 You and me
65 Anger
66 "Makes my heart sing" (60s rock song)
67 "The Greatest"
68 Illinois DCFS consent decree, named for plaintiff's initials
70 Cryptologist
72 Portuguese hello
73 Alley-____
74 Wet dirt
75 Eskimo
78 Kurosawa film
79 The loneliest number
80 Highest, best
82 Physicians' professional org.
83 Enthusiasm
84 Last of weekend
86 Fifties' cool
87 Greek letter
89 Freud's discovery
90 Vacation Club
92 Auntie in Garland classic
94 Cornell University early child development theorist
100 Saturday morning TV, Looney ___
102 Sometimes-synonym for non-fat
103 Nought
104 One
105 Slang title for minister
107 Dry river bed in Middle East
108 Type of cycle
111 Congressional Black
114 Humble home
117 Southeast Asian New Year
118 Intentionally forgot
121 ___ Kosh, B'Gosh
122 Roast
123 America's best-selling family car
126 Wise ____ (smart alec)
127 Myself
128 Division of a long poem

Crossword Puzzle

129 Fastens
130 Bacon's sandwich companions (abbr.)
131 A country's total output for the year, for short
132 Joins
135 Hewlett Packard (abbr.)
136 Samuel J.'s co-star in Pulp Fiction
137 What a nightlight does
139 Scottish lake
140 Top-rated TV drama
141 Degree for Hathaway of xx across
142 Unit of electrical resistance
143 Islamic name for God
145 Tropical lizard
147 Not Available (abbr.)
148 Home of Early Childhood Family Education Program, for short
150 Spike for one
151 Definite article (Fr.)
152 Midday
154 Took to court
156 Midwestern banking chain
157 Bloom County's penguin
158 Roseanne's husband
159 Ancient sin city
162 No ___, and, or buts
166 Alcohol withdrawal symptom (abbr.)
167 Inquire
168 NY Institute behind *I Am Your Child* public ed campaign on brain development
172 God to Pharaohs
174 Trapped
175 Salutation
176 Atoll
177 ____ Warming: greenhouse effect

Down

1 Newborn horse
2 Shakespearian hero
3 Factor in blood typing
4 Dampen
5 Type of mortage (abbr.)
6 Father
7 Fingerpainting, e.g.
8 Sesame Street big
9 Looking for athletes to join the team
10 Important skills for young children to acquire
11 Perth ____, NJ
12 Initials of light bulb inventor
13 Mistake
14 Aye or ____
15 Beloved
16 Restarting computer
19 Sun-dried brick architecture (SW USA)
20 Moviemaker and early childhood activist
23 Family Support pioneer Weissbourd
29 White with age
32 Shortchange (non-P.C.)
33 Groups of witches
34 Type of bird
37 How Englishmen get their news
40 College offering correspondence degrees in family support
41 Stated
42 Extension for computer file
44 AKA, National Center for Clinical Infancy Programs
45 Sucker for children
46 Mobile state
53 LAPD noisemakers
54 Effervescent beverage
55 ___ care, alternative to hospitalization
56 California Tomorrow's Hedy Nai-___ Chang
57 Type of hotel suite at Niagra Falls
58 Broncos and Dolphins conference
59 Ethiopian princess, heroine of Verdi opera
60 What an odometer measures
63 A chemical compound
66 Fred Savage TV show, The _____ Years
68 Bawdy vaudeville show
69 AIDS virus
71 Belted constellation
76 Born (Fr.)
77 Exasperated name for early childhood developmental stage
79 Opp. Of off
81 Bow (or neck) ____
85 Over there
88 Friends from the "hood"
90 Strand
91 Piaget's stages
92 Spielberg hit
93 Cut the lawn
94 Comprehend
95 Whopper manufacturer, for short
96 13th letter of the alphabet
97 More pleasant
98 Sling ___, Billy Bob Thornton film
99 Children's poet Ogden
101 A cereal
106 Oscar-winning costume designer
109 Not Available (abbr.)
110 Liquid Plumber competitor
112 Elementary school designer from Yale
113 Addict
114 Acronym for something preschoolers learn
115 Undergarment
116 Real
119 Pantyhose fabric
120 Former name of Prevent Child Abuse America (abbreviation)
124 Without direction
131 Type of song for three or more voices popular in the 18th century
132 Fields
133 Hold tightly
134 Boredom (in Boreaux)
138 Local Area Network (abbr.)
142 ___ Faithful
144 Dances
146 Easily understood
147 National organization for African American Children
148 African American child development leader Evelyn
149 Government grant-bestowing agency
153 Persian Gulf state
155 Run quickly
156 Not (pref.)
160 Turkish unit of weight
161 Type of tree
163 Fifth month in France
165 Type of hotel (abbr.)
167 SNL's Franken
169 Morn
170 Definite article (Fr.)
171 ___ Man River

Answers are posted at www.frca.org, and will also appear in the next issue of America's Family Support Magazine.

Ask Sharon

Dear Sharon: I am new to the family support field and hear the word collaboration used frequently. In my family support program, we try always to coordinate our efforts and to cooperate with each other. Is this enough? Or is collaboration something more? — Signed, Confused About Collaboration, Chicago, IL

Dear Confused:

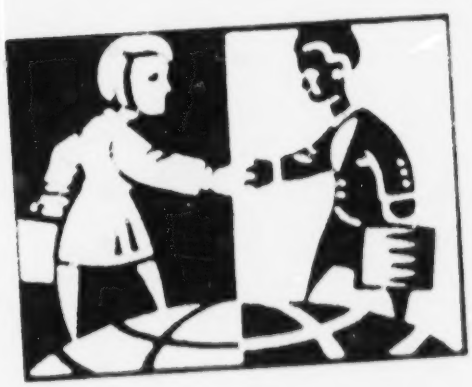
Collaboration is a word used loosely among many groups including agency and organization administrators, legislators and policymakers, and family support staff and community residents. While coordination and cooperation are necessary in the collaborative effort, collaboration is much more. For many, coordination and cooperation are what happens in the name of collaboration. Coordination is simply people coming together to work on a specific task; it is very limited in scope and duration. Cooperation is an informal understanding that individuals will help each other without sharing leadership and resources and without changes to their delivery of services or the way they operate.

Collaboration contains the key elements of a common goal or mission, shared responsibility, mutual investment, accountability, information sharing, respect for everyone's contribution, and trust. When collaboration happens, the following things occur:

Increases in
- comprehensive services
- cost-saving service programs
- community support
- knowledge from sharing information

Decreases in
- duplication of services
- money spent on costly intervention
- turf issues
- families falling through the cracks

Improvements in
- communication
- advocacy
- visibility with decision makers, media, and the community
- understanding of client and community needs
- use of the diverse perspectives that different members from varied backgrounds bring



In this day of limited resources, changing legislation, and more families and communities in need of support, can we in the field of family support afford not to collaborate? I think not.

Need help?

There are many ways FRCA can help answer your family support questions. Whether you're looking for funding strategies, ways to promote parent leadership, or ideas for how to evaluate family support efforts, or simply want to network with others in the field, you can:

- Write to Ask Sharon
- Post your question on our web site bulletin board at www.frca.org
- Get on an e-mail list on family support evaluation
- Call the FRCA Help Desk at 312/338-0900

Have your letter published in Ask Sharon and you'll get a gift certificate to use on FRCA membership or publications. Address your letters to:

FRCA
Ask Sharon
20 N. Wacker Drive
Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60606
312/338-0900 (fax)
afsm@frca.org

Sharon Sneed provides FRCA technical assistance and training in a wide variety of family support settings and is Project Officer for Federal Projects at FRCA.

Everything You need to know About Adoption

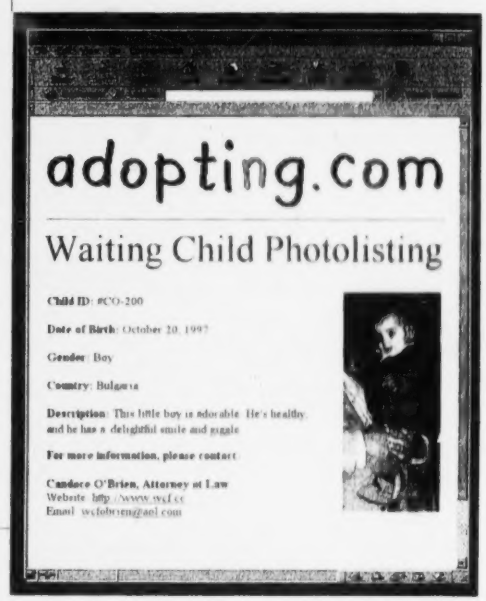
There is no shortage of adoption information on the world wide web: Search engines turn up anywhere from 1089 to 968,490 sites that discuss the topic. Do you want to slog through that many sites? Probably not.

Enter adopting.com, a site that pulls together countless adoption resources into a cohesive, easy-to-navigate resource for prospective adoptive parents, programs that serve families, social service agencies, adoption agencies, foundations, and anyone else who needs information on adoption.

Web master Julie Valentine calls her site an "adoption resources index," an apt name given that the "Featured Sites" area alone contains descriptions of and links to 16 adoption web sites. Major areas in adopting.com are:

- **Getting Started**
  Answers basic questions about adopting, such as: What is a home study? What kind of adoption is right for you (domestic, international, open, special needs, cross-cultural, private, agency, county/state)? Provides general information on what those seeking to adopt can expect from the process.
- **Agencies, Facilitators, and Attorneys**
  Lists and describes agencies and professionals serving those who wish to adopt, and links to their web pages (some of which contain text or photo listings) and e-mail addresses.
- **Waiting Child Photo Listing**
  Individual children and sets of siblings are described by sex, age, birth country or region, and special notes indicating new listings and urgent needs for adoption. Those interested in more information contact the agency, facilitator, or attorney using the information provided.
- **General Adoption Information, Support and Resources**
  A catch-all category for links to support groups, adoption laws, adoptee rights and support, and other sites.
- **International Adoption Information and Support by Country**
  A country-by-country listing of support groups, travel advice, mailing lists, and places to connect with other families who have adopted from the same country.
- **Letters to Birthparents**
  Letters from prospective adoptive families to connect them with birthparents.

Web master Julie Valentine calls her site an adoption resources index, an apt name given that the Featured Sites area alone contains descriptions of and links to 16 adoption web sites.


adopting.com
Waiting Child Photolisting
Child ID: #CO-200
Date of Birth: October 20, 1997
Gender: Boy
Country: Bulgaria
Description: This little boy is adorable. He's healthy and he has a delightful smile and giggle.
For more information, please contact:
Candace O'Brien, Attorney at Law
Website: http://www.wcf.cc
Email: wcfobrien@aol.com

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- **Resources for Special Needs Children**
  For those who have opted for or are considering special-needs adoption, resources on raising children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects, cleft lip and palate, drug exposure, etc.
- **Books, Cards, Announcements, etc.**
  Links to web sites for adoption-related books, cards, and announcements.
- **Mailing Lists, Newsgroups, Bulletin Boards and Chat**
  Ways to connect with others on general topics as well as special topics like cross-cultural adoption, adoption from specific countries, open adoption, single adoptive parenting, and more.
- **Design Services**
  The web master designs low-budget sites for adoption agencies and "Dear Birthparent" sites for prospective adoptive parents.

Behind the Screen

A link to the web master's home page reveals an inspiring woman who needed adoption resources, was overwhelmed by the hodge-podge of web sites, and decided to do something about it. In addition to administering adopting.com, Valentine works as a performing arts educator and web designer for a variety of clients.

Valentine first laid eyes on her own two daughters, Madison and Amber, through pictures of them posted by adoption agencies on the web. Now Valentine includes pictures and stories of them on her personal web page—the cyber version of the traditional wallet baby pictures. "Two kids is a heck of a lot more work," she says, referring to the recent addition of Amber to her family. "But the baby is terrific."

Valentine liked using the web for her adoption search because it is "a private forum, but you are connected with people." The web also makes communicating with adoption agencies nationwide cheap and fast.

Getting Listed

Adopting.com is clearly a public service, not a money maker. Listings of agencies are free, and Valentine even designs web sites at special low rates for adoption agencies and for those seeking to adopt ("Dear Birth Parent" letters). "I believe in having an equal showing for everyone who is a valuable resource, such as agencies that have special needs children and children of color and don't have money to advertise," says Valentine.

Some special extras are available for a fee, such as listings by agencies that include pictures, and ads seeking birth mothers. Adoption agencies report families contacting them as a result of seeing their listings and pictures on the site. In the future, Valentine wants to make adopting.com searchable by age and gender. "Right now I am starting small and will see where it goes from there."

For Better Or For Worse

WHAT DID MOM WANT TO TALK TO YOU PRIVATELY ABOUT, LIZ?
SHE KNOWS I WENT INTO A BAR THE OTHER NIGHT, AN' SHE'S NOT TOO HAPPY ABOUT IT.
YOU DID?!! THAT'S COOL! —WHAT WAS IT LIKE?
WELL, IT WAS SMOKY AND DIRTY AN' A CREEPY OLD GUY TRIED TO PICK UP ONE OF MY FRIENDS. IT WAS PRETTY BORING, ACTUALLY.
YEAH.
...THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH A LOT OF STUFF YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO!
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FAMILY PORTRAIT

Elaine J. Gotbaum, Stamford, Mass. 1996

If we can judge from the past, there is every reason to believe that family support premises and principles will continue to inform new directions in program and policies at every level, from building strong communities to setting national priorities.

—Bernice Weissbourd, Founder, Family Resource Coalition of America

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New interactive software turns the *How Are We Doing?* self-assessment kit from a family support essential into a state-of-the art computer tool. Still based on the principles of family support practice, this kit lets you measure your successes in strengthening and supporting families — and make a plan for improvement using specific benchmarks.

Print customized questionnaires with several clicks of a mouse, so that parents, staff, and board members can help assess specific areas that are important to your program. Then enter the completed questionnaires into the colorful, easy-to-use interface and print out comprehensive reports that get to the heart of your program's strengths and challenges.

Even if you don't use a computer, *How Are We Doing?* is your comprehensive kit for assessing your family support efforts in one or more areas:

- Governance • Outreach & Engaging Families
- Programs & Activities • Parent Education & Child Development
- Working One-On-One With Families • Center Environment
- Relationships With the Community • Home Visiting
- Staff Policy & Supervision • Monitoring & Evaluation

A complete spiral-bound, 211-page guide walks you through the process of planning for, carrying out, and following up on a program self-assessment. You also get questionnaires for parents, staff, and board, plus stand-alone self-assessment booklets to fill out.

To order, send $44.95 (FRCA members) or $52.50 (non-members) plus $5.00 for shipping and handling, along with your name, shipping address, and phone number, to:

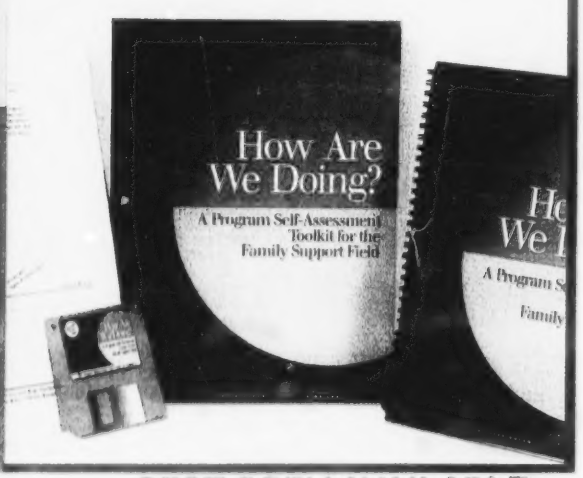
Family Resource Coalition of America
20 N. Wacker Drive, Ste. 1100
Chicago, IL 60606

Bulk discounts available. Call 312/338-0900.

New Computerized Version!

How Are We Doing?

A Program Self-Assessment Toolkit for the Family Support Field



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